

A M U S E M E N T S

In H I G H L I F E ;

OR,

Conjugal Infidelities in 1786.

IN A

Series of CONFIDENTIAL LETTERS,

BETWEEN

LADIES who have distinguished themselves
by the Multiplicity and Singularity

OF THEIR

A M O U R S.

Fidelity in Wives is all a Joke,
Whilst there's a Coffin, Shrubb'ry, or an Oak.

A W O M A N.

L O N D O N :

Printed for G. LISTER, No. 46, OLD BAILEY.

M D C C L X X X V I .

AMUSEMENTS

FOR HIGH LIFE

BY C. E.

London: J. Rylands 1866



SECRET OF COMMUNICATING LETTERS

BETWEEN

ADVISERS AND THEIR ADVISEES

OR THEIR

AMOUR

BY J. RYLANDS, 1866

London:

Printed for C. STRATTON, 22, PATERNOSTER ROW.

REPRODUCTION

CONJUGAL INFIDELITIES.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

LETTER I.

CAROLINE to ELIZA.

YOU ask me, dear Betsy, why did I marry? I did it for the same reason with Lady Townly; the restraint to which a girl must submit, became a burthen, and therefore I preferred the easier yoke of

matrimony with a fool. Heaven ! what a husband ! or rather what a convenience ! The pride of the world condemned my conduct for giving my hand to my mother's servant ; but indeed that was all I gave him ; for the creature had not one inducement in him to deserve more. My mother tolerated him to sit at table, not through a motive of reconciliation, but to secure my conduct ; yet his ignorance and awkwardness were not the least abated. She wished to form his manners, but her task never could be accomplished. When he was advised, he became sullen and audacious. I passed it over with a jeer. My mother suppressed her indignation in silence, and our company smiled at each other. I availed myself of this excuse for my liberties, and joined in the contempt against my *protector*. His ambition was gratified in the enjoyment of idleness and fine cloaths. We wished him to learn to read. He would not be at the trouble.

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That I thought so much the better, as my letters were less liable to discovery. He seized one a few weeks after we were married, and was carrying it to be read; I luckily snatched it out of his hand, or that would have been revealed, which I always wished to remain a secret.

You see, my dear, with what little reserve I unfold to you my secrets. Can you doubt of my friendship, after such an instance of confidence? Ought I not to claim a return on your side, with the same candour? The errors of our sex are unpardonable in the eyes of the world. Men allow themselves to roim at large with impunity; but one single step in the path of pleasure, damns our fame irrecoverably; yet our appetites and desires are as craving as theirs. Had we not artifice to elude their power and vigilance, we should be wretched indeed! Excuse my supposing you are not without your share in that necessary qualification; your own desires make it indispensable

to you ; you, as well as I, have had your pleasures ; the ill-tempered and impotent relique of debauch and disease, to whose arms your parents condemned your youth, required a nurse, and not a wife. Such an object could never kindle a flame in your heart. I will take upon me to say that yours was too susceptible, not to have felt an impression in favour of an object more congenial to yourself. A girl at eighteen, never flies into the arms of age and infirmity through choice ; and if compelled there, she ought, in justice, to be allowed to make reprisals on the instrument of her punishment.

Do not imagine I draw this picture of your situation, as an excuse for mine. No, my dear Betsy, you were condemned, by avarice, to be exposed to temptation. But I, with my eyes open, rushed into it. My life has been a chain of chequered pleasures and intrigue. You desire to know the sweets of mine.— You shall have them. I think

(5)

I think my readiness to comply, gives me a claim to yours; I ask them on the same confidence I impart mine. Let our mutual blushes excuse our errors, unveil them tenderly to the eye of sympathy; the transfer of our secrets to each others bosom will not invalidate their security. Take no advantage of my candour; let it be your example, and the bond of our esteem.

Your affectionate,

CAROLINE.

B 3

LET.

LETTER II.

ELIZA to CAROLINE.

A Sad morning succeeded a dismal night. Your letter found me meditating on the horrors of a sleepless companion, convulsed with coughing, and choaked with phlegm ; in the intervals of which, my lips and cheeks were besmeared with slaver. Of ptifans and clouts, what a consumption ! The heaving of his lank sides, and hollow groans, though my music for nine years, have still the effect to make me vaporish. I found myself relieved, on the receipt of yours, and embrace, with pleasure, a proposal that affords me the satisfaction of unbending my mind.

Your goodness in excusing the liberties which nature and youth will take,
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as well as the unreserved avowal of your own motives, determine me to commence the recital of our adventures interchangeably. I had a heart susceptible, which my old dotard could not purchase. He got my person, by a contract with my father; my heart's own choice was fixed where it might be happy. Jemmy Fairfield was encouraged in his addresses to me; nature was his advocate, and he succeeded. The impression remains in my bosom to this hour. Whilst all our happiness was thus afloat, on the golden wings of fancy, and our minds were anticipating future reality, love came in the form of the *highest bidder*, from my present swain, 'Squire Williams, through my father, to whom the proposal was made, when on a visit to the 'Squire, who was then in a fit of the gout. My father required not a stronger motive to determine, than the remission of 50l. per annum of rent he paid the 'Squire, which was a preliminary offer in the business. My Jemmy

Jemmy was discarded, peremptory injunctions were laid on me to see him no more, but dispose myself to receive his rival, who was to hobble over to our house as soon as he was able, which happened at the end of three months. You can better conceive, than I express, the horror this step plunged me into. I resolved, at first, to fly into the arms of my lover, and confide in his mercy ; but I was strictly observed, and denied the use of pen, ink, and paper. Those who had the controul over me, were deaf to intreaty ; my mother, though she pitied me, was constrained to submit to my father's will. Under all these difficulties my admirer came, and in a few days I was condemned to his arms.

On my return out of church, after sealing my misery, I saw my dear Jemmy, the emblem of melancholy, at a distance ; the shock was too great for my fortitude ; I sunk into the arms of my husband ; his tottering limbs, unequal to sustain the weight, yielded, and

and brought his body to the earth ; his rump, which first touched the ground, received a severe shock, from the pain of which he yelled most pitifully ; we were helped up and led to our carriage, to the no small entertainment of the by-standers.

A violent reaching seized my good man, on his arrival home, in consequence of his fall ; a physician was sent for, who pronounced it a touch of the gout, and confined him to a regimen ; which interrupted, as to his part, the matrimonial festivity of the day ; and the bruise he received by the fall, became so inflamed, that he could move neither to one side or the other ; and therefore was advised to lie in a separate bed. But this part of the advice he declined : we were put to bed, and there I passed a watchful night, with no more solid comfort than the promise of future joy when he should be able. Though my heart loathed the monster, I treated him with respect and submission ; permitting

mitting him to use those liberties which excited desire, without his being able to gratify it.

The irritation which his impotent wantonness excited in me, made me first perceive an attraction to pleasure, distinct from the emotions of my heart. Virtue had hitherto regulated my desires. The prospect of pleasure, guarded by honour, had the sole sway over my soul. I now saw myself condemned to a life of teasing, without enjoyment; and the next day took it into my head to suffer the flower to be cropped, by him who had the greatest interest in my heart.

The restraint I was under, kept me in this situation a week longer, during which time my passions became lusty and furious. I had an itch to be pleased, and my husband's impotence continued. He could not move without assistance. At length I contrived a meeting with my lover, at his father's house, in the family's absence. He treated me with melancholy respect; I

saw

saw he loved me: his gentle manners were free from rude familiarity; his air shewed a concern for my honour and happiness, which checked the impetuosity of my desires, and made me blush for my defect of modesty. However, all-powerful nature, at length, made the sympathetic nerve of pleasure in him, vibrate in unison with mine; we were lost in extacies; and, locked in each other's arms, exhausted the cup of transports.

He was astonished at the proofs I gave him that I ceased to be a maid in his arms only. He kissed me over and over: I was at his disposal without reserve; 'till the lateness of the hour was the bitter monitor of a prudential separation. I returned to my dotard, whom I affected to caress; he was overjoyed at the visible alteration in my conduct: such is the artifice necessary for our sex to adopt, when they deviate from the path of truth.

Write to me, my dear, be full, be explicit, and confide in the affection of

Your ELIZA.

LETTER III.

CAROLINE to ELIZA.

WHAT rigid moralist can blame you? Let the mask of virtue, armed with all its gravity, put on its grimace at your conduct; yet the most haughty virtuous female must have felt as you did in your situation, and acted in the same manner. Nature never endued our hearts with sensibility, but to direct us in the pursuit of our happiness; its warmest dictates proceed from the most refined sensations. The authority which can enforce the union of a living body with a dead carcase, may constrain its efforts, but cannot bias its emotions. The irresistible impulse of love acquires a fresh spring, by comparing the object we loath with the object

of

of our delight; the delicious tumults we feel in the course of a tender passion, assume more poignancy when their fluctuation is disturbed; we both found it so; I once loved, but loved a betrayer; my unguarded fluttering heart became an easy prey to his artifice; by enjoyment, his passion grew languid, and the impertunate ardor of my love, banished him from my arms.

Yes, my dear Eliza, his perjured vows were brittle fetters; novelty only had charms for Billy Ramble. A few weeks substituted disdain and flight, to that tender and insinuating assiduity which won my heart. Shall I relate to you the manner of my seduction, and impart to you a share of my feelings; that, by the picture, you may see the contrast between my delusive dream of happiness, and the succession of my solid repentance; the inlet to all that remorse which a giddy career has been aggravating to this hour. I seldom can bear reflection,

but the consolation of a faithful bosom, where I can find a true repository to unburthen the contents of my own, divides the load.

In my fifteenth year I found myself alive to those sensations which nature and flattery inspire at that age; my person was agreeable, and I knew it. Variety, that prevalent ingredient in our composition, actuated me to extend the train of my admirers. In coquetry I soon became an adept. But amongst the number over whom I had the power of attraction, the attentions of two were particular to me. Mr. Bevil, and Will Ramble, two characters, opposites in every thing; the manners of the one were gentle, sedate, and tender, those of the other were dissipated and full of vivacity; a continual circle of pleasures, in which I often participated, were the employment of his life: his wandering fancy evinced a difficulty of fixing his heart, for which prize there were many rivals; emulation sets a value upon a man

man destitute of all intrinsic worth. This he perceived and availed himself of it. My pride would not suffer me to be outdone. I dressed at him; some particular attentions on his side, assured me the appearance of success. I triumphed in my own breast at the conquest; he improved in his partiality to me; and, from the opinion my folly entertained of his taste, I attributed the decision in my favour to my own merit, and then began to assume that authority which love gives us over our slaves. I affected to dally with Mr. Bevil; this always awoke his jealousy; Bevil, who was not disagreeable to me, and in whom I could easily trace the appearances of a genuine passion, put on an air of chearfulness, at what he called my condescension; his gentle sensibility became the object of Ramble's rally, which he had not effrontery to withstand. I joined in the laugh at his expence: a party of pleasure of Ramble's proposing always drew me away from the se-

date conversation of Bevil, who was left to repine alone at the hardships of his situation.

One evening that worthy man chanced to meet me alone at home, in the absence of my mother, who countenanced his addresses. With every mark of genuine respect, he addressed me on the subject of his passion; he assured me, that it was with difficulty he could assume a topic in which his happiness was so deeply interested; the passion, continued he, your merit has inspired me with, is but too apparent not to be perceived. I flatter myself, that I may have some degree of share in your esteem, and that your heart is not totally unconcerned about a man, who has no other view than your honour and happiness in conjunction with his own. If a term more tender than that of love, could be found to express my sentiments, even that would not do justice to my feelings; you are the arbitress of my happiness, and I only entreat an answer, as candid as my request

request is sincere.—Here he pressed my hand, while his voice faltered. I blushed, but, collecting myself, charged him with raillery, and said such language was the common artifice of his sex. He disavowed the justice of the charge, and, kneeling, pressed me to an explanation. The fervor and agitation of his manner, excited in me a fit of laughter. I compared him to one of the sanctified, who quake on the emotions of the spirit, and recommended him to mount the rostrum at some tabernacle, where his manner might captivate one of the holy sisterhood, who groan in the flesh as well as the spirit. I wished for Ramble's presence, who was an excellent proficient in caricature; assuring him that his present position was a happy attitude for ridicule.

Stung to the heart, he rose up, and going to the door, he assured me that the interest he had in my happiness would never permit him to intrude again; and that he would leave the

field to his happy rival. He bowed respectfully, retired, and kept his word faithfully; for he avoided my company, from that day forward, as much as possible. His conduct gave me some uneasiness for a while, but assuming my pride, I affected in myself to despise a man who did not think me worth a second repulse. I then sported my influence over Ramble, as a retaliation on Bevil.

Ramble, who imputed the discontinuance of Bevil's addresses to the decisive preference he had in my eyes, redoubled his assiduities, which now had found the sure road to my heart. My mother's inclinations against the success of a man of such noted levity, gave cause to many clandestine assignations between us, at each of which he appeared in raptures. A profession of mutual love took off restraint from our sentiments; I avowed my partiality for him, without blushing. He was ruler of my heart and conduct; he was not ignorant of his influence, and

and I became miserable in his absence. My mother, from my unusual pensiveness and solitude, was alarmed for the state of my health; my agonies were increased from an absence of above a week, of my lover, from the park, the place where we casually met; she determined on taking lodgings at Kensington for the benefit of the air, on my account, which she instantly put into execution. I obeyed reluctantly, and was constrained to the humiliating means of sending Ramble an anonymous account of our retreat; not considering that I run the hazard of courting the company of a man, in whom perhaps was effaced every impression of regard that I thought it his duty to entertain for me.

But all prudence yielded to the irresistible tyranny of love. He replied, apologized for his absence, and took lodgings near us. It was that month when revived nature was decorated in her glittering garb, May, wafted on the

the wings of fragrant zephyrs, had all happiness complete to me when he appeared. Our interviews were stolen ; maternal prudence had but little weight in the scale against a passion so fervent and entire as mine ; when Ramble made no assignation, I undertook the task without reluctance to see him.

News came to my mother that her sister, who lived at Windsor, had met with a violent hurt by the overturning of her carriage. She flew on the wings of impatience to see her : I was left at home, sole mistress of my conduct and our apartments ; our servants I permitted to go to town, the people of the house were gone out to spend Whitsun Monday. Ramble, who watched my mother's conduct, was acquainted with her departure ; he solicited to spend the evening at our lodgings ; my easy heart yielded to his request ; he came ; we were alone : his impassioned transports urged me to propose the connubial

bial bond as a privilege to his liberties. He vowed, with rapture, that it was his only desire, and, if practicable, to put it into immediate execution. But how to effect it, during the small interval of time in which my mother would be absent, and reap the joys of a golden opportunity which might not offer again, was an objection of the last importance. Did I doubt his honour, he asked me, with a tender languor ; did he appear in my eyes to be that worthless wretch, who deserved mistrust ; did he sacrifice all pretensions to the rest of my sex for me only, to stand suspected as unworthy my confidence ? Surely he did not center all his happiness in one object to rob her of her's ? He conjured heaven and earth to witness the sincerity of his intentions, and condemned himself to punishment, ten-fold severer than any human ingenuity could devise, were he capable of harbouring a thought inconsistent with the most tender and lasting

lasting affection.—I was silent, and gave vent to my swoln heart with a flood of tears. He kissed them off my cheeks. Relieved by these, my inward tumults subsided, reason began to resume her sway. I then strove to argue with him ; his artifice confuted the objections of my willing mind. I sunk into his arms upon the sopha ; nature ruled the helm within me ; the tide of love rolled impetuous through my veins, and broke down the barriers of guiding reason, and all my fortitude ended in proving me—a woman.

That precious jewel we part from with such anxiety, and when lost regret so bitterly, was now gone from me beyond the power of recal. I pressed the robber of it to my bosom, I measured my extacies by the fleeting minutes, and wished to arrest their anxious speed. Night approaching, reminded us of the hour of separation : he stayed late, and from the improbability of my mother's return, he

he urged me to suffer him to pass the night with me; I willingly complied, after arranging matters so as render his escape easy through the gardens in case of necessity. Delight and rapture occupied the space till the ill-natured approach of the sun-beams warned us of separating.

I conveyed him out with safety, retired to my solitary pillow, and gave myself up to the arms of a delicious slumber.

Adieu my dear Eliaz. Pity me, pity your sympathizing

CAROLINE.

L E T.

LETTER IV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

MY bosom, incapable of pleasure from any other object, than that which solely occupied it, was divided between rapture and alarm. Love alone had the sway over my faculties. The sense of guilt vanished. Immersed in bliss, I was only anxious for its continuance. My joys thus heightened, had but one allay; and I proposed to Ramble, the removal of it. I reminded him of his matrimonial promise, and he upbraided me with a diffidence in him, injurious to his feelings. These artful reproaches on his side, which seemed to impeach my tenderness, led me into the most soothing complaisance to his pleasures. The sympathy thrilled

irresist-

irresistibly through my nerves, till we both expired in extacies.

Thus died away the first eight days, the conclusion of which brought home my mother. The theatre of our joys must now be altered. The fatal sofa, the bed, the chairs, the grotto, witnesses of our guilty pleasures, must be exchanged for some retreat. I now envied the honour and happiness which awaited the wedded dame. Her joys, which expanded the heart, were open and avowed ; mine, which consumed my bosom with a hidden fire, were the cause of my blushes and reproach ; her's reflected honour and content on the authors of our existence ; mine shame and sorrow on those to whom I owed that debt. The congratulations of acquaintances were her lot ; the contempt of every one, mine. In the absence of my betrayer, I summoned up my resolution to insist on his compliance to rescue me from infamy ; but, on his appearance, by

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the management of his evasive wiles, my purposes evaporated before the flame of love. A slight cold confined my mother for a few days; her tenderness for my health urged her to dispense with my attendance on her for some hours every day; which time she insisted I should employ in the enjoyments of exercise and air. I complied willingly; and came daily by the stage to town, to a lodging which Ramble had procured in Maddox street, for the purpose of our assignation.

The first fortnight, his punctuality and attention were to my wishes. I came daily, and, after our separation, paid some visits, as a cloak to my motive for coming to town; and staid with the most intimate of my mother's acquaintance till after dinner, and then invited them to Kensington; by which means my conduct avoided being questioned. My first visit was to the lodging, but one morning, to my surprise,

prize, I found a verbal message left for me with the woman of the house, that the gentleman who took the lodgings was gone out of town for a week ; he did not say whether he would keep the lodgings any longer ; she required I would tell her if it was our intention, as the week was to be up the next day, and she had an offer of a tenant who had seen them the evening before, and who would engage them quarterly. I informed her that we would keep them, and begged of her to take care of any letters directed to me, as I would call every day ; she asked my name ; the question stunned me ; but I replied evasively, that as I would call every day, I would take care to see about it myself.

Four days had elapsed, and no account of Ramble. The torture and anxiety of my mind sunk me into melancholy. Sorrow now was the sole occupant of my bosom. I for-

med a thousand opinions; I accused him of infidelity; and then my vain imagination, that fancied him as charming as ever, repressed my injurious surmises: I made every apology for him, but despair had too great an influence to suffer any one of them to be durable. One opinion expelled another. The irresolute fluctuations of my wavering mind were like the yelping billows of the restless sea, or when, by an insidious calm, the watry element receives nature's image in its glassy breast, and that some lurking monster suddenly regurgitates his briny draughts, and jumbles the mirror into a confused ruin. So would the impetuous fallies of my wrecked bosom agitate the studied security of my mind, lost in a reverie, and awake me to the most poignant sense of wretchedness. But one morning, whilst hopes and fears had thus divided my breast, the Morning Herald, which lay on the breakfast table, announced

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announced to me the marriage of William Ramble, Esq; to Miss Margery Rich, the only daughter and surviving heiress of the late Scrapeall Rich, of Lombard-street, Esq; banker. Spare, my dear Eliza, any farther recitals. Conceive the rest from

Your affectionate,

CAROLINE.

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L E T-

LETTER V.

ELIZA to CAROLINE.

YOUR reasons, dear Caroline, convince me that I acted right, and that in following the bent of my inclinations, I only did justice to the wretch who robbed me of my happiness, and debarred me from the fair possession of the choice of my heart. I made reprisals, as far as circumstances would allow. Oh ! that I could but hear that you had spirit enough to despise the unworthy being, on whom you bestowed your affections. That you should remain long, after such an instance of ingratitude, a victim to a passion for so base a male prostitute, is inconsistent with that spirit I know you to possess: wound up to the height of happiness, and so speedily

speedily precipitated from its summit to the lowest pit of despair ! The alternative was misery. What must you not have felt, as sufferer, when the very recital gives me such inexpressible anguish ? I knew the person whose wealth bribed your undoer ; a hump-back, distorted features, and two knees at perpetual war, the underprops of a waddling rump, gave her the appearance of a caricature on human nature ; a temper of mind, as ill-disposed as her body was deformed, frightened mankind from her presence. Can you envy Ramble such an acquisition, and after his perfidy to acquire it ? I would, in your place, unconcernedly leave him an undisturbed possession. Write to me then, my dear friend, the result. You had, I am sure, a happy riddance of such a companion for life.

My assignations with Jemmy Fairfield, were many and agreeable ; he was of a discreet and circumspect turn of mind ; his manners were not vitiated with the fopperies and dissipation of a coxcomb ;

coxcomb : he was a thinking person, and added a fairness of character to a sound constitution. Five weeks brought about the power of motion in my husband ; he made an attempt to storm that fort, where he thought man never entered before. Though willing to yield like a prudent commander, I defended the garrison for a time, and at length capitulated ; the conqueror made his entry, explored the works, and deposited the dearest treasure of which he was master, in the body of the citadel. He groaned with extacy, I returned his caresses. There is, my dear, the foundation stone laid for a son. But that business was done to his hand. Too well I knew the difference of capacities between that masculine and sappy sprout, which was able to effect the purpose, and that tendinous production of exhausted membrane, which lolled out from between the skin and bone of a withered carcase. A violent fit of coughing had like to have strangled him ; with much

much ado he expectorated the tough phlegm from his breast. I wiped his mouth, as soon as he was at ease.—I cuddled him in my arms to sleep.

The anxiety I had for a premature delivery, was now at an end: my dotard, confident of his own ability, was fully persuaded that his effort was successful. I flattered his vanity by a silent assent. I conformed my conduct to his pleasure in every thing, and received in return, all the fondness and indulgence of impotence. My restraint grew less daily. Jenny had a false key to our garden door, on the rear of the house, which led to a retired summer-house that I fitted up and converted into a library, and hung the inside of the windows with Venetian blinds, with a strict charge not to suffer them to be raised up. He came there secretly every day. The floor was covered with a carpet, lined and quilted with wool between the divisions; the under part of a book-case, where a man could sit at ease, was left vacant. Thither

he

he crept for concealment on his entry, as he was likewise furnished with a key to open the lock: a bolt within secured him, till my approach released him from his prison, to enfold him in my arms. One caution was not neglected, for lest a busy eye should perceive his entrance without the garden door, he had the coat and the hat of a peasant, concealed at a distance from the house, which he put on to elude the eye of observation. I undertook to compose a poem in praise of wisdom, and the happiness of a matrimonial engagement with a faithful turtle, whose sage experience and wisdom were the true guardians of honour and happiness in a virtuous wife; and contrasted the dangers to which a woman's virtue is exposed, when a dissipated and false coxcomb falls to her lot; whose example and conduct are inducements to retaliate. I addressed it to my husband; he was delighted with the thought, and extolled the language, which he said was worthy so well-

well-chosen a subject. I chose the solitary retirement of the summer-house for my study, he often came to hear me recite those passages which pleased his taste, and sometimes plagued me with his company for an hour, to my no small mortification for the suffering of my Jemmy.

The following lines he pitched upon out of the poem, to hang under my picture.

Oh ! hap'ly rescued from the storms of life,
In honour's harbour lives the wise man's wife;
The age and prudence of her pilot proves
The firmest anchor to secure their loves ;
Where beauty yielding to affections sway,
Through duty's paths, she bends her willing
way ;
There freed from all that can give rude alarms,
She takes her refuge in her husband's arms.

Be so good, my dear Caroline, to substitute *youth* for *age* in the third line, and *lover* in the eighth to *husband*, and read it again. Adieu, my dear; cease that melancholy account, and tell me by what steps your own spirit rescued you from the delirium of that situation

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situation the faithless Ramble seduced you into. Arouse yourself; and turn to a more pleasing topic; and since life has bitterness enough that is inevitable, let us crop the flowers we can, and participate your joys to your

E L I Z A.

L E T.

LETTER VI.

CAROLINE to ELIZA.

I MUST, my dear Eliza, get rid of the subject I was upon. My mother came down to breakfast. She perceived, notwithstanding all my endeavours to conceal the state of my mind, that I was unusually agitated. I put the paper in my pocket, lest her sagacity might discover the cause: I ate no breakfast, she ate little. I complained of pains in my head, her feelings were alarmed, an apothecary was called in, he termed my malady a nervous disease, and ordered me a vomit to cleanse my stomach, to give his medicines a better effect. I was obliged to submit, and swallow, for some days afterwards, his nauseous draughts. The period ar-
E rived,

rived; in which I had reason to judge how I stood affected relative to pregnancy, and found my maladies aggravated by the reality of that fact. Oh! physicians, how little and unequal are thy prescriptions to ease an afflicted heart! The terrors of reproach drove me to despair, and despair animated me to resolution, my recovery advanced slowly. I despised in my heart the man who ruined me. The following letter, left for me in Maddox street, will give you a just opinion of his character. He assumed the name of Hill, on taking the lodgings, and had so much lenity as to lend me the name on the superscription. I knew his hand writing, and therefore concluded that I was the object of the address.

“ MISS RIDGEWAY,

“ A variety of circumstances have
 “ determined me to the step I have
 “ taken; my small fortune united
 “ with

" with yours, might give us an
 " existence in beggary only; when
 " the efforts of our mutual pleasures
 " would be productive of an incum-
 " bring offspring. Your secret at-
 " tachment to me shall remain so;
 " you have accomplishments sufficient
 " to recommend you to a more con-
 " venient husband; as the knowledge
 " of what passed between us before
 " marriage, might only embitter our
 " future lives, and awake them to
 " jealousy.

" Yours, most obsequiously,

" Wm. RAMBLE."

P. S. To secure your character, I
 have given you the name of Hill on
 the outside of the Letter.

E 2 Here

Here was insult added to injury; I despised him, as capable of all manner of baseness. I resolved to root him from my heart, with all his sex; but how to shelter my fame from the tongue of the malignant world, was my greatest care. The evil was great and irretrievable, and therefore I was reduced to the unavoidable necessity of chusing of the two, the lesser. My husband had a pert assurance, and wished to display himself as a person of figure in his own line. He was gallant amongst women of his own rank, and made the hearts of some of them uneasy. I made freedoms with him to encourage a return, he did not want instruction, nature was his preceptor; he paid me all attention, according to his manner; I received it, we came to an explanation. I did not wish for delay, but took the opportunity in a few days of tying the indissoluble knot.

I had, at least, the sanction of legitimacy for the offspring of my guilt.

The

The reflection on the uneasiness my mother must feel at the knowledge of this step, made me unhappy; but however it was my only refuge from a greater evil. I told the apothecary, who attended me, that the cause of my malady did not come within the reach of his art; and, throwing myself upon his humanity, I disclosed to him my marriage, assuring him that the suppression of my passion for my husband had nearly destroyed my existence, "I
 "withstood it a long time, from a
 "consciousness of its impropriety, but
 "found its impulse invincible; I did
 "not seek it, it was the genuine off-
 "spring of nature, by whose hand I
 "was formed, and to whose laws I
 "was subservient; and though I was
 "conscious my choice must bring me
 "into an ill opinion with him, yet I
 "implored he would undertake to in-
 "form my mother of it, and be my
 "advocate against her just displea-
 "sure."

He paused awhile, and then exclaimed; “ Good God, is it possible
 “ that so many advantages as nature
 “ and education have endued you
 “ with, should be so unfortunately
 “ misapplied! I pity you; but the
 “ task is too much for me to bear to
 “ unfold to your mother what must
 “ rend her aged heart.” “ But, Sir,
 “ what must be my situation, who
 “ am the aggressor, if you feel so
 “ much who are only concerned by
 “ the interest of humanity? Pity me,
 “ dear Mr. Lowe, pity me, and soften
 “ her pangs and mine; the influence,
 “ the respect she has for you gives
 “ you over her, will assuage her grief,
 “ or at least keep her within bounds
 “ of reflection; do not I beseech you
 “ abandon us; do not, for her sake;
 “ she will require some friendly bo-
 “ som to share the contents of her
 “ sorrow upon the first shock.”

After much entreaty, he acquiesced, and said it would be prudent to defer the information a little longer, 'till he could

could prepare her mind to bear it with some degree of patience, and as her health was but indifferent, he wished to wait for its re-establishment. With this assurance from him, we parted.

Not only to affect love, to an object whose meanness, ignorance, and despicability, deserved my aversion, to bear the tortures of a conscience stained with impurity and hypocrisy, and to behold an indulgent parent, whose goodness I perverted ; but also the reflection that I abused the tender passion of the gentle Bevil, with whom I could have enjoyed respect and happiness, were so many thorns in my breast. Him who loved me tenderly, and offered to become the guardian of my power and reputation, I rejected to encourage a dissipated libertine, who sought no other object than my ruin. Oh ! lost to all happiness, why did I prolong a contemptible existence, only to permit the dissipated affections of a callous heart,

to

to lead me from vice to vice, till satiety has almost bereft me of enjoyment.

A few days after my interview with Mr. Lowe, we had a visit from the father of Mr. Bevil. The old gentleman's appearance had a very distressing effect upon me, he had all that gaiety in age which is the effect of a temperate and well-spent life; he was not averse to the attentions of his son to me; he invited us to spend a week at Richmond, where he had a house; happily my mother declined it. He then proposed a visit to us, with his family, adding that he knew one amongst the number of the visitors, to whom he conjectured the party would not be disagreeable; at the same time he smiled at me: I blushed; "do not redden, Miss Ridgeway, for I make no allusions." My mother cordially assented, and the next day was at length determined on.

The interval was, to me, as bitter as

as the hottest pains of hell: the morning came, and with it, the two Miss Bevils, with their father and brother. The customary compliments passed, I sat down between the two young ladies, collected myself as well as I could; a variety of chat passed on, when the brother became the topic,

“ My brother Dick,” says the younger, “ is strangely altered of late;” “ yes,” says Miss Bevil, “ that’s very visible, and I believe Miss Ridgeway is the cause;” “ that I believe too,” said Lucy; “ and it is a pity to use him ill; poor fellow, he has an excellent temper, and would make a compleat easy good natured domestic husband. I’ll lay a wager my father will propose it this day.” “ I wish Miss Ridgeway,” said Miss Bevil, “ you had a brother, and, to tempt you to shew some tenderness to Dick, I believe I should hazard a refusal from him.” “ You are merry, Miss Bevil,” replied I; “ your brother

“ brother is too well acquainted with
 “ the *beau monde* to think of fixing
 “ his opinion upon me ; but I thank
 “ you for the honour you confer on
 “ me.” These were the unguarded
 effusions of innocent and spotless
 hearts ; ah ! what a strange reverse,
 when I looked into my own.

The good humour of our company
 was exercised, to rouse young Bevil
 from the thoughtful melancholy that
 hung over him ; my situation betrayed
 an awkwardness, “ Dick,” says the
 old gentleman, “ a young lady, like
 “ Miss Ridgeway, is but little in-
 “ debted to your complaisance.”
 “ Sir, Miss Ridgeway never ceased
 “ to be an object of respect to me.”
 He is far gone, papa, says Miss Bevil.
 The old couple laughed, Dick red-
 dened, and I found myself alive to
 my own remorse.

I enjoyed but little or nothing ;
 young Bevil appeared to me more
 amiable than ever.

At dinner, where my husband
 waited,

waited, my senses were confused ; his impertinent arrogance was conspicuous ; my melancholy was interpreted to be the embarrassment of my sex, when we feel what we are too coy to express. My mother hinted her approbation of what she thought to be my sentiments ; the old gentleman was his son's advocate, as well as the ladies ; young Bevil preserved a reserved complaisance : my husband, perceiving how matters were going on, became quite awkward and sullen ; he was reprimanded, and I trembled for his discretion. The scene became at last too trying for me ; my powers were overcome, and a general languor seized my relaxed limbs ; the good humour of the company was interrupted. I retired to my apartment. Mr. Lowe was again sent for, he advised me to be left alone, and have no company. On seeing the family of the Bevil's, he conjectured the cause of my illness, as he knew there was a probability of overtures from that

that quarter. The Bevils took leave in the evening, which was an alleviation to me. I entreated Mr. Lowe to put an end to such occurrences for the future, by informing my mother how I was circumstanced.

Next day he appointed to break the subject to her, and I was to remain at his house in the mean time. I went out immediately after breakfast. Soon after my departure, he called at our house, and had a private interview with my mother: her concern for my health made me the topic: he indulged her importunity in inquiring into the nature and cause of my illness.

“ Madam,” says he, “ her disease is such as nature only can relieve; the mind, and not the body, is the source of those maladies which give you such repeated alarms, and such is their nature, that I believe you only can now apply the remedy which will be sufficient.” “ You are mysterious, Mr. Lowe; what relief is in my power to give, that “ I would

" I would with-hold from my child ?
 " Speak, dear Sir, be explicit."
 " Nature, Madam, has emotions
 " which reason cannot suppress al-
 " ways. I fear you will refuse the
 " only request I have to make in her
 " favour, and on which depends her
 " happiness or misery." " Do you
 " suppose, Mr. Lowe, that I am
 " callous ? Think you that I delight
 " in her misery ?" " No, madam,
 " but nature, which levels all distinc-
 " tions of rank, engaged her heart
 " in a sphere she trembles to men-
 " tion ; she struggled a long time
 " with a passion, that nearly ter-
 " minated her existence, in endea-
 " vouring to suppress it ; but the
 " hidden fire consumed with more
 " violence within ; the effects of
 " which you have been a witness to,
 " till at length, nature's irresistible
 " sway"——" Hold, Mr. Lowe,
 " spare my ears the rest.——she is
 " dishonoured." — " No, madam,
 " the seal of matrimony has sanctified

“ her conduct, and your domestic
 “ is your son-in-law. For what is
 “ irretrievable now, she throws her-
 “ self at your feet for forgiveness.”

Her full bosom suppressed her utterance, till the melancholy relief of tears gave vent to her voice: her first expressions were exclamations on the bitterness of her sorrow. Mr. Lowe made no opposition to the torrent of her effusions; he sympathized with her, justified her feelings, till the violence of her emotions were exhausted, and reflection began to connect her words; he seized the opportunity, condoled with her, and then expatiated on the reproaches her severity might bring on me and herself, by abandoning me. She acquiesced, and consented to allow me support at a distance from her, and that I might take with me the object of my choice.

The disposal of this business in this manner, reconciled me to bear the company of my husband tolerably; he

he was sent after me, to a lodging procured for us at Chelsea, where we had an allowance of 60l. a year from my mother. He now assumed the husband, and introduced me to all his former acquaintance: grooms, coachmen, footmen, errand boys, servants out of place, house-maids, cooks, &c. &c. were the perpetual routine of our company. I was often constrained to sit amongst the mobility at some vulgar tea-garden, on a Sunday evening, on a level with the riff-raff of the metropolis, and the circle of my particular company, such as I described above. The cruelty of my situation reached my mother's ears, and her maternal tenderness being centered in me, her only child, she recalled me to her presence, with forgiveness to me and my husband. We obeyed the summons, and she retired to a little house, which we engaged near St. Alban's, remote from company, with an intention to form the manners of my

husband. How far she succeeded I have already told you.

A new scene now opened ; I felt no other impression in my breast than a repugnance to love for man ; a contemptible husband, whom I only took as a convenience, could furnish no charms to the imagination. I forgot Ramble ; he did not seem worthy of my contempt, I became pregnant, and was delivered in our retreat ; the reputed father caressed it. I was obliged to submit to his loathsome and stupid fondness to me ; I recovered a-pace, and we moved to town. I revived my usual vivacity, and felt myself as well disposed to coquet as ever. London has no scarcity of allurements to one already well-disposed to enjoy the pleasures which offer. We left the young one to nurse, where it died about three months after. I felt little regret on its father's account. I revived all my former acquaintance, as far as they would, and was tolerably happy in the

the circle where I moved. I believe I have tired you out, but I determined to give you a full account of that step which robbed me of my happiness, and led me into the wild career where pleasure only was my guide. You shall hear no more in that melancholy strain, as my breast never enjoyed sensibility sufficient afterwards to bestow one moment's regret on any man living. Adieu, my dear ; write to me ; your happiness with Jemmy was complete ; may it have continued long, is the wish of your

CAROLINE.

LETTER VII.

ELIZA to CAROLINE.

I Congratulate you, my dear Caroline, on the happy deliverance you had, and give you every allowance of praise for your art and management. Happiness must be enjoyed, at any rate, but it came to me on easy terms. Your approach to it was through the fiery ordeal.--The 'squire, in the middle of summer, was seized with a fit of the gout ; his confinement was just to my wishes ; we were ordered to separate beds ; the attendance necessary in his chamber, was judged to be too annoying for me. I chose a separate apartment, on the floor which is on a level with the garden. Here was a long-wished for opportunity ! The joys of a night I never tasted in my Jemmy's arms ; our situation made the envious

envious interposition of cloaths in our embraces, unavoidable. I longed to press his naked body to mine, to range all over his manly frame, explore his athletic limbs, and put those bosoms in contact which burned within for each other. When all the house was at rest, punctual to my summons, he scaled the window, and cautiously disposed his cloaths in a closet. We posted on the wings of desire to the scene of engagement, and there, O my Caroline, I felt all that happiness which is the surest security to woman's virtue, by affording a full gratification to all her wishes.

The love which burned in my bosom for the companion of my delight, made every object besides, less than indifferent to me. Had fortune made his lot and mine the same, I can aver that familiarities with any other would never have taken place; he had such sole possession of me, that any object which disputed his place in my heart was loathsome.

I lived

I lived and breathed only for him, and when the offspring of our affection ranked me a mother, my heart doated on it, for its father's sake, superior to my interest in it as a mother.

I often repined at the bitterness of my fate, that so contracted my duty to my love. Humble poverty I would have submitted to, for his sake who engrossed my soul; nor would I grudge my share of toil to make him easy.

What must be the infatuation of that sex, who pique their honour so much on the fidelity of their wives, and yet are mean enough to accept of the hand of a woman, without consulting the interest of her heart! And when the poor dependent victim does not regulate her conduct by her duty, but has the misfortune to be detected in an indulgence according to the bias of her heart, infamy, and often want aggravate her former misfortunes.

Towards

Towards the conclusion of the summer, the expiration of some leafes of an estate belonging to my husband in Yorkshire, demanded his presence, as soon as he was able: the time of setting out was fixed upon. The terrors of separation from my lover were great to me; I informed him of the matter. I strove to make it appear necessary, that the care of our son and heir would require my presence, but my husband would not hear of it; he said, the short time of our absence could be no injury, as the doctor should call to see it every day. How to act now, I knew not. The presence of Jemmy where I was to be, and so remote from home, might cause suspicion. Despairing of any resource, but resignation to my fate, the following billet relieved me from my anxiety.

“ DEAR

“ DEAR BETSY,

“ The squire's servant has been
 “ enquiring to hire some horses for
 “ your carriage in your Yorkshire
 “ journey. I have bought four ex-
 “ cellent ones, and disguising myself
 “ as a person who hires such, have
 “ agreed with him for the journey,
 “ and am to be driver myself. I de-
 “ clined the offer of diet, but in-
 “ sisted on board wages. My terms
 “ are so moderate, that a man who
 “ lives by the business would ruin
 “ himself to match me; in that ca-
 “ pacity I shall await your double
 “ orders,

“ And remain fervently,

“ And sincerely, your

“ JAMES FAIRFIELD.”

What an instance of affection! his
 own spontaneous offer. The day came,
 our coachman attended, a large faded
 laced coat covered his body, huge
 Jack

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Jack boots his legs, a clumsy wig drowned his visage, and a large brimmed hat, covered with tarnished oil skin, crowned all. We agreed to dispense with servants, as we might, on our arrival, get, amongst the tenants, a temporary attendance. Thus equipped, we set out; my heart's joy before my eyes, and the object of my disgust by my side. On this setting out, I shall suspend my narrative, and wait for the continuance of yours. Farewel, live long, and be happy!

Your truly sincere,

ELIZA.

L E T.

LETTER VIII.

CAROLINE to ELIZA.

THE complicated piece of awkwardness, and ignorance, to whom I vowed obedience, was the next difficulty I had to surmount; but how to do it, and preserve the name of affection to a man for whom I apparently made so great a sacrifice, required all my address. Under the masque of reforming him, I joined in the ridicule of such company as we kept, his rooted vulgarities were not to be removed. In endeavouring to teach him to play cards, if their course was not to his wishes, he scattered them upon the table, which he often overturned to divert himself; he put his hands frequently into the bosoms of young ladies, and,

and, when reprimanded by my mother, he accused her with jealousy ; because such an old *bunks* as she was not worth it, she envied the pleasure, he said, of those who were. When he wanted to retire from company, or was sleepy, his general address to me was, “ Come Lina, let us take our “ a—e in our hands and go pig it “ together, I’se sleepy, and I’ll be “ damned if I stay for the king “—come along girl.”—Such treatment determined me to be rid of him at any rate.

The attention paid me, by several smart young fellows, was a relief from his brutality, and amongst the number was one of those athletic adventurers from Hibernia, who imports more wit than money into our country. I gave him a preference in the eyes of my husband, whose jealousy was excited : my view so far succeeded, I encouraged Mr. O’Carrol’s addresses, and insinuated that the life of my husband was an impediment to

G that

that happiness I had no objection to with him. He overwhelmed me with his fawning absurdity, but he had a fund of good nature. As soon as he understood what was the obstacle between him and my consent, he undertook to quarrel with my husband, and so give cause to a genteel mode of murder. He trod upon my husband's toes three or four times, who at last resented it, by offering to box him. " Any weapon you please, " honey, " says the Hibernian, " from our own knuckle-bones, to a twenty-four pounder ; as you never was a gentleman I will condescend to fight you at your own *weapons*, the first. Or what do you think of a case of blunderbusses, with fluggs, in a saw-pit ? You will have more chance ; for if you go to fisty work, you will have but little, as I'll make you dance to the tune of, Shela na gigg, on one of my hands, and with the other I will whip you like a top." " By Heaven man,

" man, I'll have nothing to do with
 " you," says my lord and master,
 " but swear the peace against you."
 He kept his word, and my champion
 was obliged to give security for his
 good behaviour ; which being effected,
 the poor fellow was detained by a
 sheriff's officer at the suit of a trades-
 man, and obliged to go to a lock-up
 house.

The situation of my champion sug-
 gested to me an idea of sending his
 antagonist for company to him ; the
 allowance my husband had was tri-
 fling, and he wholly depended on my
 mother for that. His vanity in cloaths
 was the only pardonable foible he
 had ; he was indebted 60l. to his tay-
 lor, who made several applications in
 vain for his money. My mother
 protested against allowing him any
 more than she promised him. I took
 care to inform the taylor, at second
 hand, that nothing but compulsion
 could recover his money. The plan
 succeeded, and my deary was called

out from breakfast, to an officer who conveyed him to a place of security. The enormous expence of living in a lock-up house, being too great for his income, and no resource coming from home, he was constrained to take up his residence on the south of London, under the care of Lord Mansfield. Detainers were lodged against him for other debts, which put the recovery of his liberty beyond hopes.

I now had my full swing, and gratitude obliged me to consider if I could serve the poor Irishman, whose debt and costs amounted only to 13l. I sent him a 20l. bank note, he liberated himself. The effusions of thanks the poor fellow made to me, evinced that he was not deficient in sensibility; he continued to pay his attention to me, as the means of his delivery were known to him and me only; his perseverance in endeavouring to please me, got the better of my prejudice against his absurdities, so far as that he

he at last insinuated himself into my arms.

He won my esteem, and I now experienced all the enjoyments which manly power can impart. We often passed whole nights together, when I was absent from home, under pretence of being with my husband. It was astonishing, my dear, what vigour animated this man; though when we met, he was always in a state of intoxication. The frequency and vigour of his attacks so weakened me, that my back and loins ached violently, my stomach could not retain any thing, my eyes swam in languor, my memory was impaired; the enjoyment of pleasure from such powers did not however affect my heart, the pleasure of sensation was all my object.

I saw and enjoyed company without reserve. I could now make advances to young fellows disengaged of that restraint a girl must submit to. Why should I disavow that I loved

flattery ? the assiduities of my gallant were not equal to satisfy the appetite that passion inspired me with. The lesson I received from Ramble's perfidy, disposed me to sport with the feelings of all his sex. My gallant was the creature of my own pleasures. I received him on those terms only ; and as he filled his post with such entire satisfaction, I resolved to continue him till he deserved my disgust. It was evident on both sides, our passion was not of that refined nature, which would produce regret on a separation. Sometimes three or four days elapsed without an interview, which increased the stock to be expended in pleasure at our meeting. The prelude of sentiment was but short to the exercise of sensation ; after which we parted mutually satisfied, making a future appointment. The interval I employed in a round of such pleasures as offered, as much at my ease as if nothing had happened.

Adieu,

(67)

Adieu, Eliza; continue the sequel
of your journey, the party must have
every inducement you could desire,
when Cupid's disciple held the reins.

Your's, my dear,

CAROLINE.

L E T-

LETTER IX.

ELIZA to CAROLINE.

THUS equipped, my dear Caroline, we set out. Our workman, who was no unskilful driver, managed his horses well; every jog alarmed my heart. My fears were, one time, for the stability of the coachbox, which I apprehended would give way to my lover's weight; and, when the agitation of a rugged causeway shook his body, I trembled for his security; I wished to partake in his situation. He often turned round to view me; my attentive eyes met his. The vigilance of my husband, I wished to disarm, by the most affected tenderness; he swallowed the bait: in this manner we passed the first day, till we arrived at —, where we intended to remain.

remain that night ; our coachman, after attending his horses, had the civility to offer his attendance on us as a servant, saying it was his custom to act so by every person who treated him genteely, when the inn happened to be crowded, as it was then ; we accepted the offer, which saved us much inconvenience. The fatigue of the day brought my husband's illness, of the stomach, on him again ; we dispatched our coachman to an apothecary for assistance ; he came ; and, after a few significant contractions of the brow, gave us an elaborate discourse upon the nature and cause of the symptomatic gout ; during which time my husband's patience became so fatigued, that he slipped a guinea into the man's hand, assuring him that he found himself much relieved since he appeared ; and as he had so well satisfied him in the cause of a disease to which he was almost a victim, he thought the advice and trouble of the doctor ought to be recompensed ; and as he did not feel any

any necessity for taking medicine, he wished the exulting practitioner a good night. As soon as he left the room, my husband's suppressed rage got vent, and he damned the garrulity of the pedantic blockhead a hundred times over. He next searched his port folio for a recipe he found very serviceable upon the occasion, which he sent by our coachman to have made up at some other place. Tommy, who understood that opium was the basis of the medicine, enquired what dose was sufficient for a person of his own constitution ; being informed, he bought it, and diminishing the quantity a little, added it to the draught he was sent for ; the old man drank it off, and instantly an heavy sleep in a chair proved the effect. We both assisted to undress him, and laid him in his bed ; the ease with which he breathed, removed our alarms for his safety. Tommy then assigned to himself a bed in a small room within ours ; and I lay by my husband, after paying a sacrifice

sacrifice to Venus in the arms of my coachman. The soundness of his sleep encouraged my lover to make a second attack on me, even by my husband's side, who, during the scene of action, was even as insensible as death.

The night thus passed, revelling in mutual joys, till the noise of servants about the house summoned my lover to stable duty. After a farewell repetition of *see saw*, I let him out of the room, and resigned myself to sleep.

The effect of the opium kept my husband from waking till eleven o'clock, when he began to blink upon me, with one eye shut, and the other open. After yawning and stretching for a few minutes, he moved towards me, kissed me, and made an effort to engage ; in which effort he fell asleep, whilst my body was sustaining his inanimate weight. I disengaged myself from the load, got out of bed, dressed myself, and left him to his rest.

On going down stairs to breakfast,
the

the first object that presented itself was a red coat ; a military man is not disagreeable to our sex in general. He bowed respectfully ; I returned the compliment. Understanding, as I afterwards came to learn, that I was the wife of an old man, he introduced himself to me, with all the pert vivacity of a confident coxcomb. Politeness obliged me to receive the compliments he lavished on me ; and I did it in a manner to heighten the opinion he had of himself. Being informed which way we were travelling, he said, his route lay that way too, and he should be very happy to accompany us, and hoped my husband would soon be down stairs, that he might have the honour of kissing his hand. My husband, I told him, had had a very indifferent night, owing to a visit of the gout ; I left him asleep, and did not imagine we should depart that day. He regretted the cause, but was pleased at the consequence, which insured him the felicity of offering his services

services to me on any occasion, and he deferred proceeding till we were ready. I excused myself by every means in my power, but to no purpose; his assurance prevailed; so that I was likely now to have a dangling obstacle to my happiness, or a total privation of it in the company of my husband. I sat down to breakfast in an apartment, whither he followed me, saying he would not suffer me to remain in solitude, but would study to make every moment entertaining to me. Our coachman waited on me, and was a spectator of the assuming absurdity of his rival. After breakfast, I paid a visit to my husband, who was still in the arms of sleep. I shook him, and recommended to him to get up, but his feet were so swelled with the gout, that he could not move without assistance. Here we were obliged to continue five days longer. In the evening the following *billet doux* was slipped into my hand, by the Captain :

“ Lovely fair One !

“ The approaches which the power
 “ of your beauty has made to my
 “ heart, have stormed its out-works,
 “ and carried the citadel ; you reign
 “ there triumphant ; I burn with
 “ misery, till your goodness will di-
 “ viney condescend to impart a cool-
 “ ing relief to the distracted heart of
 “ your adorer. Remember, angelic
 “ woman, that Venus loved the God
 “ of War ; and you need not fear
 “ that Vulcan can compose nets to
 “ entrap us in the hour of enjoyment.
 “ I swear, by the honour of a soldier,
 “ that I shall love and adore you till
 “ death. I have seen death in many
 “ frightful forms, and would defy
 “ it, in any shape, to extort from me
 “ a thought injurious to your happi-
 “ ness.

“ Your adoring

“ GEO. BOBADIL.”

The

The forward pertness of this letter, nettled me. I sent for the coachman, and conveyed it privately into his hands. When he was at leisure, he absented himself for a few hours, having restored me the letter before he went away, with directions to take care of it till his return. I did so, and in the space of about four hours, he returned with a magistrate, and two officers, who took my admirer into custody. He directed me to shew the letter to my husband, before he came to the knowledge of the arrest; I did so. This proof of my affection gave him great satisfaction; he vowed vengeance against the man who dared to offer him this insult. While he was thus menacing, the coachman came into the room out of breath, asking his honour if he would see a swindler he had taken up, who was then in the house? The fine flashy Captain, Sir! I have fixed him; he has no more a commission, than a broom-stick. I saw him convicted

some time ago, in Devonshire, where I then was. One Captain Fairfield (for my lover was on the half-pay list of one of the reduced regiments) fell into his company, and heard from his own mouth that he was a Captain in the very same regiment which this Bobadil little knew his honour belonged to. Captain Fairfield found him an impostor, and exposed him as such to the neighbourhood, whose hospitality he was abusing. He was taken up and confined, but his poor mother, a washerwoman named Spriggins, in Roll's Buildings, Chancery-Lane, made interest with an attorney, whose clerk he was during term, to get him his liberty; and I doubt not but he will confess the whole truth; if you confront him and me, he dare not deny it. It was I that gave this information to a magistrate, who was going to commit him to prison. He confessed the whole, little knowing, through the disguise, that he fell into the same hands. During his examination,

nation, he betrayed such pusillanimity and meanness, as disgusted every body with the remembrance of the blustering Captain. In the course of this business, which afforded my husband no small entertainment, a croud assembled; he was tossed into a cart, and conveyed to a place of safety, amidst the shouts of the populace. His horse was detained for his reckoning, but the inn-keeper was obliged to restore it to its owner, it having been advertised in the London papers, as well as its rider, who exceeded the date of his promised return. This I give you, as a specimen of the insults and injuries to which the wife of an old man is exposed.

Adieu, my dear, you had a great deal of work upon your hands when you left off; continue the recital to

Your faithful

ELIZA

H 3

LET.

LETTER X.

CAROLINE to ELIZA.

I Was, my dear Betsy, fully employed ; I had all that a woman could desire, who had no bias of the heart. I liked my champion tolerably, but without suffering any uneasiness about him. Had the first object of my affections been worth it, I should have been happy in him alone ; even the misery he fell into after his marriage, had his lot and mine been one, I would not have upbraided him for involving me into, if I had his heart. His dissipated life threw him in debt considerably ; at the end of six months his wife saw herself, instead of being mistress of 30,000l. and other valuable articles, reduced to a small annuity of 50l. which Ramble had it not

not in his power to alienate. They were parted ; he took to a stupid course of living by gambling, and he became a sot. My enamorato was no stranger to houses of this nature, they often met there, and played together ; my uneasiness encreased at the knowledge of this intimacy between two men who knew so much of me ; I could not attempt to urge him to decline going to such places, nor did I imagine it would be of any use ; chance alone relieved me, but it was at the expence of my champion.

The two identical possessors of my person quarrelled irreconcileably ; the Irish blood would admit of no other decision than pistolling ; a challenge ensued, the combitants met in Hyde Park. The first shot struck Ramble in the heart, he fell down and expired instantly without a groan ; my champion fled from justice to France, and sent me a farewell apology from Dover, just as he was embarking, in these words :

“ *My*

“ *My dearest Woman.*

“ Honour compelled me to spill
 “ blood ; justice is very quick, but
 “ I want to out-run it ; I am going
 “ to cross the seas, where I must
 “ only live to regret the loss of those
 “ happy hours which made our
 “ pleasures one. When I am on the
 “ Continent you shall have my ad-
 “ dress ; I must alter my name there.

“ *Adieu,*

“ *The delight of my soul !*

“ **TIMOTHY O'CARRELL.**

Two birds killed with one stone ! I
 was not sorry that a man, who had it
 in his power to upbraid me so much
 as Ramble had, was out of the way ;
 I pitied his fate now it was out of his
 power to injure me : and, for a few
 moments, he was present to my re-
 collection, in that same form and
 manner.

manner as when he won my heart ; but that soon vanished, I regretted the loss of my champion, through familiarity, and only wished that he might see his offspring, which I was carrying when he departed.

The promise he made of writing to me, he never observed, so that we parted even on both sides : my time of lying-in began to engross my serious attention ; I was obliged to suspend the career of enjoyment, and pay more attention to my husband, to give him a relish for the appearance of what he was to father. By this time, his morals were as corrupt as his manners were bad ; the school of iniquity, where he now imbibed a knowledge of the lowest devices to which necessity is compelled, had formed him a knave. To use his own expressions, he was *up to every thing*. I brought him at each visit something agreeable ; he seemed content with his lot, and I did not wish to interrupt his happiness.

I was

I was a second time mother of a boy; my labour was not severe, nor did any thing seem to impair my health; I soon recovered strength and spirits: pleasure expanded my heart; society became charming, and coquetry had all its delights; self-denial was a practice, obsolete in my system, my heart craved for pleasure, and I began to cast about in society for an instrument of it. An active disposition, like mine, could not remain long without employment. Parties, of which I was one, were formed. We lived in Park-street, Grosvenor-square. The next house to us was inhabited by a lady of an agreeable turn of mind, who had been three years a widow. I was introduced to Mrs. Sims (for that was her name) at Major Peacock's, where we dined; our vicinity improved our acquaintance. She was not deficient in sensibility, though she had something of a religious turn. Free from that gloomy severity which distinguishes the

the bigot, she was always even and cheerful, her manners were easy, and she seemed inclined to impart her happiness to all around her. Her fortune and person were intitled to the notice of men of rank, but she appeared to have an aversion to a second matrimonial engagement. The memory of her first, prejudiced her against embarking into a second. Mr. Sims paid the debt of nature at the age of twenty-five, a victim to his own folly. A constitution exhausted by uninterrupted dissipation, required her cares, as well as affection, for two years, which they lived together. Her heart, so unhappily placed, deterred her from a second experiment. We often passed the evening at each other's houses, in select parties; our general company were an Austrian officer, introduced by Mr. Grenville, chaplain to Lord Clarefont, who was a relation of the late Mr. Sims, and whose friendship to the widow was not impaired by the

the death of his kinsman; and Mr. Grenville, who was a sensible steady man. The foreigner had all that politeness and good humour so characteristic of the Continent: his circumstances were easy, and his person genteel; his foreign accent, and embarrassed diction, I undertook to reform. He submitted to be my pupil for a while, and concluded with professing himself my lover. The hon. Mr. Byfield, a younger brother to Lord Copeall, wished to engross the attention of the widow to himself; he was a constant attendant in Park-street. Lady Harriet Pastime, another of our party, who had measured forty-seven summers without changing her maiden name, seemed to have a design on the officer. Mr. Grenville, who sought to please her ladyship, often felt the severity of her temper, in his endeavours to succeed in her opinion. My mother was generally witty on the parson, whom she often rallied. Byfield, who was

was not free from a tincture of the Cynic, gave her ladyship many severe hints on her obduracy to Grenville. He sometimes insinuated a prejudice against gallantry, and concluded by advising Lady Harriet to fix her heart for life. Her vanity interpreted his irony to be a sincere compliment. She gloried in the surmize. She was gallant with the officer; she dressed at him, but could obtain no more than superficial complaisance at his hands: her forwardness gave her repeated occasions of exercising her patience at his indifference. The dress of a girl of eighteen, displayed upon a woman where the hand of age had made its ravages, made her ridiculous: her penchant for the officer, she boasted of, as if she met encouragement; her severity to me, with the cause of it, was discernible. I bore it with ease to myself, being in some measure secure of a preference in his attention and complaisance

I fance

fance, which my pride stimulated me to encourage.

My cicisbeo, (for so I shall stile my officer) proposed a party, at his lodgings, to our circle. Lady Harriet's importunity prevailed on him to entrust the management of the supper to her domestics, who should attend on the occasion, as it would save him the trouble a stranger must be liable to. The evening came, we all met, except the widow who sent an apology that she was indisposed; an apology came also from Mr. Byfield, that, as the House of Commons was expected to sit late, upon a question of importance, he was under the necessity of attending his duty. The apology was feasible, as he had a place under government. Lady Harriet, who displayed all the elegance of which she was mistress, turned to me, with an air of self-sufficiency, commanding the entertainment we were to sup on that evening.Flushed with the expectation of doing the honours

honours of the table, I assented to her ladyship's taste, which I could judge of by implication from all appearances. She turned from me to the rest of the company, whom she addressed in the same stile. Supper was at length served up ; we arranged ourselves, before fitting down, according to rank ; her ladyship's station was at the upper right hand side of the table : my little officer passed her by, with an air of good humour, took me by the hand, and insisted that I should favour him so far as to take the head of the table. I assumed but little reluctance, and complied, highly pleased with the distinction. Her ladyship's lower jaw lengthened about an inch and an half ; her volubility ceased ; the joy which sparkled in her eye before, vanished, and a cold sullenness influenced her whole frame. The alteration was visible to every one ; Mr. Grenville undertook to sooth her by oblique means ; my cicisbeo, who sat oppo-

site me, politely thanked us, with an expression of gratitude, for the honour done him, by the condescension of two ladies in the direction and management of his little regale. Lady Harriet vented her temper on the mismanagement of the cook, whom she positively said she would discharge for not pursuing her directions as he ought, in preparing supper. She apologized to the company for the inequality of the cookery, to what she intended it ; and thus transferred the cause of her ill-humour to an object that could not defend itself, from one she could not avow, and the company, contrary to their own conviction, acquiesced in the truth of her ladyship's assertions.

Supper being ended, we gave a scope to our mirth, in which all united cheerfully, except her ladyship. All on a sudden, the noise of fire engines alarmed us ; the fire we found on enquiry to be in Park-street : we were then in Grosvenor-street.

The

The contiguity of our concerns to the danger, urged my mother to see about our house: immediately, we all sallied out, my cicisbeo giving me his arm. On our arrival, we found it a distance from us on the other side of the way. We knocked at Mrs. Sims's door, who was just getting out of bed, and we were let in instantly; we all ran up to her chamber; and, confiding in the assurances of the gentlemen that it would soon be extinguished without any danger on our side, we sat down on the widow's bedside, who had on her night gown; from the confusion in the house, we all entered without light. The fire soon abated, and we began to reflect; when Lady Harriet, who sat on the outside with Mr. Grenville, said she heard a rattling noise in a small closet behind her; we all laughed at the idea; the widow imputed it to the agitation of the trees in the park; we all united in it. She was positive;

we laughed still more; at last she took the candle, and opened the door, when, the senator who was attending the duty of his country, (Mr. Byfield) appeared at full length, without a hat; all was dumb confusion, we stared at each other, Lady Harriet hemmed significantly; when I at length burst out into a fit of laughter, commended Byfield for his cleverness, who I said entered the house just after us in the dark, and not being perceived by any but me, I conveyed him into the closet for the purpose of diverting us after the terror of the fire, which succeeded; as the rustling noise was heard by me and Captain Bellville, I informed Mrs. Sims of it, who submitted to the joke with reluctance. Byfield came forward, supported the invention, appearances were overturned, and we changed the subject immediately, with very little embarrassment on any side; my cicisbeo whispered me quietly, "you forget
" to

“ to find the poor gentleman his
“ hat.”

We all departed for the night, taking leave of our host at our house, who vowed himself enamoured with me on parting: next morning he waited on me, and invited me to Ranelagh that evening with him; he kept a phaeton in which he proposed we should take an excursion into the country if the evening proved fair. I agreed; he waited on me after dinner, equipped en cavalier; a pair of bright bays were harnessed to an elegantly finished vehicle; I mounted it, and away we drove full speed.

He put on the most enchanting looks, and lisped love to me in the most tender strain: his idiom and accent gave a simplicity to his manner, and the suppression of his utterance for the defect of language, interested my tenderness. I wished to relieve his embarrassments, when his tongue was silent, and nature spoke at his eyes; my bosom throbbed responsive

sponsive to her dictates. He kissed my hands ; thus we employed the time when opportunity offered. We alighted at a tavern, where he ordered the horses to be put up. Here we staid and drank tea : his pleasing assiduities captivated my willing senses ; a room secure from intrusion, gave him that opportunity which realized our mutual pleasures. We enjoyed the evening like lovers : I, confident of his discretion and integrity, and he happy as his sensibility evinced. We returned at a proper hour to shew ourselves at Ranelagh, where we supped, and afterwards returned home. Adieu, my friend, fear not for my heart, he has not got it.

Write to your affectionate

C A R O L I N E.

L E T -

LETTER XI.

ELIZA to CAROLINE.

THE succession of your amours has that lively variety which is worthy of a woman of such true spirit; your triumph over the old maid, and the preference given you by a man who appears so deserving, is a satisfaction you never tasted before. The pious Mrs. Sims, poor Lady! why should not she be indulged with the pleasures of life, as the dissipated courses of her husband made the state of matrimony a state of repentance to her. What could she do more prudent than to avoid the snare a second time, by indulging herself in the arms of a man of discretion and secrecy, with whom she may break off when the intimacy becomes tiresome; that, when parting,

ing, they both may sum up the account of their stock in the firm of their loves, and be able to say we have had pleasure, and now by mutual consent, and a steady resolution of observing all due respect to each other, we mutually absolve each other of all vows, promises, and oaths, that passed between us; and give each other full and perfect liberty to roam at large in the paths of pleasure; and take up with whatever shall seem to our own desires and affections the most congenial and suitable; without let or molestation on either side.

All this is fine in theory, till we come to practice. When the object, in whom our happiness dwells, is going to be severed from us, I partly know already, to one who has attained that indifference which makes variety the high road to pleasure, the change of one lover for another is easy. An accident that happened whilst we were at the inn, waiting my husband's recovery had like to derange all.

all my happiness, and destroy my lover. He was concealed just in such a situation as you described Byfield, in that closet I mentioned to you in our chamber: the servant who had the warming pan for our bed, was detained by my husband to help in undressing him; she went into the inside room to lay the pan in the hearth, to prevent the sulphur from annoying our bedchamber. She screamed out, and fainted; luckily she did so; my husband could not budge an inch; I affected alarm; Jemmy's presence of mind saved us all. He took care each night, when he entered the closet, to fasten a cord to the window, by which his descent was facilitated in case of danger. He let himself down by this, before any of us had power to ring a bell, and got off with safety, before any waiter came. I went to assist the girl, who still lay senseless, and slipping the cord from the inside of the window, drew it in suddenly, threw it

on

on one side unnoticed, and shut the window. The girl revived, the room was searched, and every thing having the appearance of security, her imagination was said to be disturbed, and her assertions gained no credit.

My husband's pain abating, we agreed to proceed on our way, by slow journeys. It rained very severely; my dear coachman was forced to withstand it; my heart ached when I saw him come in dropping from the rain to an inn, and have no better reception than a kitchen - fire, amongst grooms and servants. I trembled for his health, and not without cause, for he became hoarse, and stiff in his joints, with the cold he underwent; but we happily arrived at our journey's end, when he could indulge himself without risk. My husband esteemed him as an obliging fellow, and had proper attendance for him; he highly approved of my humanity in preparing under my own eye his drinks and ptisan.

Whilst

Whilst I was thus gratifying my inclinations, my duty became agreeable ; a few days removed my anxiety for his safety, he recovered a-pace. The hospitality of our Yorkshire acquaintance was disinterested ; we had daily fresh instances of it by a multitude of invitations ; the younger gentry ogled me, the elder complimented me ; the ladies solicited my company ; but my heart, amidst all this routine of pleasure, had its chasm in happiness ; it was fixed upon one object only. What machines we are, my dear Caroline ; that which seems to afford so glittering an outside show, is but the gilding of interior misery. I repined that a man, equal to those who surrounded me in every respect, should be compelled from love to me to stoop to the humble station he filled ; and be thus debarred of the satisfaction his company could give me. But fortune had not yet exhausted her bitter cup ; the remainder of my potion was yet in store for me to taste of.

The melancholy and destructive system of oppression, which accumulated the burthens of this country, and severed the dependencies of the British empire from the parent, had kindled into a war. Lord Firebrand, whose inexorable obstinacy, and impenetrable stupidity, was hurrying matters to destruction, in defiance of justice, reason, or policy, found it necessary to fill up some of the reduced regiments for foreign duty. My Jemmy, whilst we were in Yorkshire, received orders to join his corps, and compleat his company. His engagement to his country, necessarily superceded his attention to me, he was obliged to repair to London. He framed an excuse to my husband, and made him an offer of his horses at such a price as tempted him to purchase them; we travelled in our own carriage, and hired a coachman to fill his place. We regretted his loss, but I had ample cause. I now felt that sorrow in its full force, which you were

were no stranger to when Ramble's baseness betrayed your tender heart. The assurances of his affection, which I had no reason to mistrust, increased my pangs. I had no reproach to make against his fidelity: I received no injuries at his hands, to excite resentment or indignation to supplant the memory of his former caresses; I could propose no deviation from his first assurances to impeach his candour and consistency; recollection improved every action of his in my eye. He so perfectly reigned in my heart, that my whole soul's compass was occupied by him. But to lose him! oh, Caroline! I must break off the subject; sympathize with

Your affectionate

ELIZA.

LETTER XII.

CAROLINE to ELIZA.

AH, my dear Eliza, what emotions has your last excited in my breast ! who can blame you for complaining ! The worth of that man is a jewel rare to be found. Oh ! the cursed effects of avarice, that thus sacrifices the happiness of the heart to splendid misery ! What recompence can wealth give us, when by the acquisition, we are bereft of all that is dear to us. Machines, as you say, we are indeed, when the spring of our actions and desires is above our controul. Why did nature form the female heart so susceptible ? Was it to make it the victim of torture and tyrannical restraint ? Our lot is hard, it must be borne ; we must not there-

therefore give ourselves up to repining. Arouse from the lethargy of love, and dispose your heart to a less painful sensation. I remember a beautiful Stanza ascribed to the immortal Wolfe, justly applicable to your situation, and that of your lost lover..

Two passions strongly pleading:
 My doubtful breast divide ;
 See there my country bleeding,
 And here my weeping bride.
 To both thy faithful lover
 Alike shall constant prove ;
 Fame fires my veins all over,
 Whilst every pulse beats love..

Cease to lament, Eliza; do not bedew the blossom of life with the tears of sorrow, “ To forget is a hard science, indeed, for a lover,” but you can alleviate ; exert your own fortitude ; abandon the recital which gives you so much pain. I do not require you to make such a sacrifice to my curiosity, as to let your wounds bleed afresh. Sear them up, and let us change the topic. Let my va-

K. 3 riegated

riegated career diversify our correspondence, it will give no poignant pain. I will proceed and recount to you the gallantries of my hero.

Lady Harriot's penchant for my cicisbeo exceeded all bounds, if we judge by her conduct. She sought him out in every company, invited him to tête à tête parties;—she extolled the elegance of his phaeton and horses, expressed the pleasure an airing in such a vehicle would give her. My soldier, who eluded or did not understand her inuendos, she often rallied for his absence; when we met, we were obliged to observe the greatest circumspection, if she was present. A pair of bracelets, and another of diamond pendants; which he complimented me with, excited her admiration and curiosity. She surmized from what quarter they came; the mortification she suffered when I evaded her enquiries concerning them, was visible: she took upon her to decide that they were foreign

foreign workmanship ; and appealed to the Captain's judgment, who professed he was unacquainted with the distinction. Her importunity on the subject often approached rudeness, but I thought it most prudent not to see her conduct in its proper light.

A day or two after Byfield's adventure in the closet, the widow called to see me whilst I was alone ; she, with blushing candour, confessed her weakness for Byfield ; adding, that she was unworthy my confidence, if she concealed any thing of the matter from me, who had so dexterously extricated her from an embarrassment she must without me have yeilded to. She felt no uneasiness from the good-nature and politeness of the company, except from Lady Harriot Pastime, whose tongue she had some reason to be apprehensive of ; her usual inveteracy against the foibles of her own sex, she was well acquainted with ; she requested my aid and advice

vice upon the occasion, and that I would pass a few days at Windsor, where she had a country house, that we might confer together upon the subject. I instantly assented to the proposal, and entreated her to consider my knowledge of her situation as secure as if it was in her own breast. A thought then struck me, by which we could appease her ladyship's rancour, by turning the tables on herself. She rejoiced at the proposal, and asked an explanation with eagerness.

Madam, there has subsisted an emulation between Lady Harriot and me for some time, and the prize is the captain's heart; the decision has been hitherto in my favour, and I think my influence over him will be of service to us in this business: I know he is of a generous and discreet disposition, and so perfectly a woman's man, that he is entirely formed for the happiness and confidence of our sex. My design is then, madam, to see him.

him before our departure, and prevail on him to coquet a little with her ladyship, who magnifies the smallest attentions of course to her, as his designs in her favour. She has long sought in vain for a *tête-à-tête* party with him ; his equipage she is ever extolling ; he shall then propose to her a party, to pay us a visit ; the offer will gratify her ambition ; the pleasure of such an occasion to excite jealousy in me, will be an irresistible temptation, as well as the vanity of being preferred to me. It will not be a hard matter then to discover them in such an awkward situation, as may make her ridiculous, so that we shall have her own self-preservation as a security for her future good behaviour.

The widow thanked me for my plan, and embraced me with joy ; we agreed that it should be instantly set on foot. I sent for the captain, and related to him our design ; he entered into

into it with pleasure; he assures me tenderly, that I was the spring of his actions. The next day but one was fixed upon for his visit with her ladyship, and we were to set out the next morning. On parting with me, he added, what but your own commands could prevail on me to submit to so long and severe an absence? We sat alone about an hour, and then re-tired.

The next morning we set out early, and arrived at Violet Bank to breakfast: my companion's cheerfulness and serenity was restored; we denied ourselves to company: Byfield, who was unacquainted with our retreat, we thought proper not to admit. That excellent anatomy of the human heart, *Cecilia, or the Memoirs of an Heiress*, we read; the delicious narrative tempted us to finish it before the second evening; and, as we had nothing new in our literary stock, conversation must fill up the vacuum.

My companion's breast, full of By-field,

field, induced her to touch upon that subject; she perceived a curiosity in me to learn the progress he made in her heart; she spared me the pain of asking a recital of it, by proposing herself to unbosom the matter to me.

I married, my dear friend, when my heart was more under the influence of duty than love; my husband I began to like, only after our parents had proposed a match between us; the management of every thing was left to them, which, when agreed upon, we were united. Love kindled daily in my bosom, and my esteem for my husband gained ground; he was tolerably attentive to me, whilst we remained in the country, whither we retired immediately after marriage. The approach of winter summoned us to the metropolis; after our arrival, a new set of visitors, the former associates of my husband's, paid their compliments to me. I received them with ease; a general gaiety reigned amongst our company; they all seemed to enjoy life,

life, and know the value of pleasure. The bottle was plied daily ; it seemed to be the general passion of the most familiar of our visitors, who seldom parted till intoxication put an end to their revels. Repeated head-achs, and qualms, the consequence of such debauch, kept Mr. Sims the most part of the next morning in bed. I often reasoned with him, and he condemned his manner of living himself ; but, the illness being over, the allurements of his associates made him drown its recollection in the evening's bottle ; his easy good nature did not know how to resist their importunity, till he at length became so habituated to wine, that he sought it through choice. His nerves trembled, he grew languid and tiresome, stupid and dull, except when the glass elevated his spirits. He next gave himself up to rioting with idle company in the streets, which introduced him to gambling houses ; quarrels arose there, and the police of the night were obliged to interfere.

interfere. I twice had an account of his being in the watch house, I lost his company, from this time forward, till morning brought him home, and that often from the arms of some of those unhappy females whose intercourse produces infamy and disease.

My forbearance and goodnature he so far imposed upon as even to boast of it. My concern for his character, and willingness to reform him by gentle means, confined my regrets to myself; I repined alone; when I could, I remonstrated to him on the injuries he was bringing on himself; he acquiesced, and swore, if he could love a wife, I deserved his love as much as any woman could; and he regretted that he did not keep me as a w——, that he might be happy with me in the arms of unrestrained love. This and more I bore with from him; but, observing a certain solidity in Byfield, who was sometimes of his parties, and who had always such a reserve in the use of wine, as

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never to get intoxicated; and also marking in him an ascendancy, that this advantage gave him over the other associates of the bottle, determined me to prevail upon him to influence the conduct of my husband according to my wishes.

He visited us but seldom of late; but whenever he came, he made himself welcome: he generally influenced the conversation, by a poignancy of sentiment peculiar to himself; whereby he repressed the importunity of those who would prevail on him to act contrary to his sentiments. But, one evening, when wine had triumphed over the senses of their company, I requested an interview with Byfield, who was as collected as if he had not drank. I explained to him my motive, and my uneasiness; he professed a willingness to comply with my wishes, but observed that it was difficult to recover men who had gone such lengths as Mr. Sims. One objection he made of keeping the company

company we in general had, which was that a Mr. Edmunds, who was the inseparable companion of my husband, was a man who had spent most of his life, in providing for the pleasures of gentlemen. His character was infamous, for he prevailed with a young giddy nobleman, to whose will he was obsequious, to discharge his own father, with some young children, from an house and farm he had as game-keeper from the nobleman's father, and substitute him in his place. He recommended this circumstance to be imparted to Mr. Sims, to see how it would operate; the authenticity of the fact, the whole county of —— could attest; and he recommended it to me to take the first opportunity to disclose it to him; I did so; and he had virtue enough left to disband his companion, giving him a suit of clothes and a horse. I rejoiced at the circumstance, and flattered myself with it as an earnest of future success.

This obstacle removed, I solicited Byfield to undertake the reformation of my husband, who seemed to mend a little by our advice; I rejoiced at the success, and my grateful heart acknowledged its obligation to a man who took such pains to restore its happiness. My exultation was but short; domestic life had no durable attractions for my husband; he launched again into the gulf of dissipation; and always took occasion, in Byfield's presence, to slip out from my company; when I lost sight of him in general till morning, and then received an intoxicated relique of debauch to my bed.

Despairing of ever reclaiming a man so lost to himself, the behaviour of Byfield appeared in my eyes an amiable contrast. Friendship with a man is a fatal introduction to a woman's heart; the transit to love was easy to Byfield; he saw that he inspired me with that passion, and I soon became its victim. My husband, regardless

regardless of me, took up his residence in Berkley square; disease expelled him thence, and he died in a few days, raving on the name of Perdita. Our intimacy has subsisted ever since, and he has the goodness, in his conduct to me, not to give me pain. The last discovery is the only thing which gives me uneasiness, as we have had our enjoyment till then secure. I never have had a child, and now believe that nature has denied me that pleasure. Byfield would marry me, but I am disgusted by my first experience of that state; he loves me tenderly, and has my promise, if ever I prove pregnant, to sanctify the birth by matrimony. My jointure is 800l. a year. I can live at my ease, and in such circumstances I am not inclined to relinquish my liberty. When she had finished her recital, supper was announced; we desired to sup alone, and passed the evening in mutual reflections. She archly hinted that my situation, as a widow bewitched, did

not make it probable I was altogether free from the tyranny of that passion, which rules the heart ; she praised the captain ; I avowed my partiality for him, and the length it had led me ; I recounted many things, but short of what I tell you, that I should not give her the uneasiness of supposing that I had an advantage over her. We retired full of expectation for the success of the next day.

Your affectionate,

CAROLINE.

LET.

LETTER XIII.

ELIZA to CAROLINE.

WITH a full heart, dear Caroline, I went to the last assignation with my lover, clad in a coarse riding dress. I crossed the field by a path-way to a little public house, three miles from our abode by the highway, which way I sent my carriage, with orders to go on slow, and meet me on the road. The way I took did not exceed two miles. When alone, I gave full vent to the tide of my sorrow, I reproached the obduracy of fortune, and wrung my hands with despair. Happy lot, I cried, must that woman's be who can brave the vicissitudes of climates, and the horrors of war, with the man she loves ! Reflecting thus, I reached the

the house, from which my Jemmy waited at a distance to escort me in: we entered, and called for such homely refreshment as the house could afford. We were seated in the best apartment by ourselves; I clung upon his neck; my agonizing soul suppressed the use of my tongue, and my heart was cleft with sorrow; I sighed and sobbed; his manly cheeks could not conceal the trickling tear. I reclined upon his bosom, and felt the big emotions of his groaning heart. Shame or fear restrained me from fainting. Thus passed one hour, when our carriage passed by at an easy pace. We must now separate; he proposed walking before me to tell the coachman, who was unacquainted with his own dress, to return. I resigned myself, and pressing him to my bosom, sighed out my last adieu. We went out of the house together; when out of sight of it, he mended his

his pace, and out-walked me. My anxious eyes followed him till he was out of view: the carriage returned, our roads lay different, and I was rolled senseless to my weary home.

Stupor overpowered me; I alarmed my husband, whose assiduity gave me disgust. Medical assistance was provided; but ah! what remedy can sooth a wounded heart! The kindness of our neighbours was directed to me, rest and comfort were banished from me; overpowered by melancholy, I became delirious, and fell into a nervous fever—I must have done, Caroline; you shall not hear from me till my recovery. Adieu, my dear; make the return of your agreeable party. I am pleased with your design on the old maid, and anxious to hear the result. Continue then to impart happiness to your

ELIZA.

LET-

LETTER XIV.

CAROLINE to ELIZA.

YOU have suffered enough, my charming friend, preserve yourself from the recollection. Forget your sorrows: youth and life insure you more happiness; the course of nature will give you liberty; that half-mortified piece attached to you must moulder; time may restore our happiness; despair not.

The morning came, which brought our expected visitors; I beheld from a dormant window, the heroine displaying her victory over the attentive Captain, with a taudry footman drawing up the rear. Figure to yourself the gaudy finery of a boarding school miss, on a Whitsun holiday, on a person faded with age. To heighten

heighten her opinion of the ascendancy she seemed to possess over my Captain, I did not appear for some time: she received me with a confidential air, and treated *her soldier* as a slave; he played his part well; I seemed a little disconcerted, and she improved in her vivacity. Thus one day passed. The next we determined that the lovers should not be embarrassed by too much of our presence. We requested their goodness to remain at Violet Bank, and permit us the liberty of two hours absence. My swain was to improve the opportunity, at the bottom of a shrubbery, in a grotto contiguous to the road, where a door opened hard by, with a spring lock, of which Mrs. Sims was to have a key; which opening towards our entrance, would admit us to a sudden view of the happy pair. Matters thus arranged, the Captain was improving every moment in her esteem till the design was ripe.

Fully

Fully pleased with the prospect of our scheme, we each retired to rest. When the house was still, I expected a visit from my lover. Lady Harriet's room-door and mine were upon the same landing; and the rooms themselves were divided only by a thin wall; my door was left unlocked. I conveyed to my swain directions written with a pencil, where to come. I kept a watch-light burning in the chimney: I heard my neighbour's door open, and imagining the captain mistook his way, I got out of bed and listened; when all on a sudden I heard a noise as if the house was falling. Her ladyship's lap-dog yelled most piteously; I ran into her room to learn the cause of the distress. I brought my candle, when a male figure, with only a shirt on, lay stretched on the floor, with the contents of the close stool running about him, which he overset in his fall; her ladyship's dog almost crushed to death; over which the disastrous adventurer

venturer had stumbled; and the lady herself half risen in the bed, struck dumb with terror; I called out for help, Mrs. Sims and my captain ran in their night apparel. We were a strange groupe, all in confusion, till we found that the appendage of the morning's equipage, the footman, was the cause of all this disturbance.

The captain rallied her at the injury done his affection for her; Mrs. Sims smiled at her exultation upon Byfield's discovery. I was now not alone in an unequal attachment. The matter was too glaring to be misrepresented; the fume of the apartments was intolerable; and we who did not wish to push matters to any extremity, consoled her. Mrs. Sims invited her to partake of her bed; after some reluctance she complied. We left the captain to manage the footman. I retired to my apartment, where my lover found me out. He recommended the servant to be secret on the business, who said, he never

M went

went where he was found, without permission.

The next morning we met at breakfast; we laid aside severity to her ladyship, who was all in tears; we even made allowances for her conduct. The captain advised her to send the footman on some foreign establishment, where her brother, Lord Twitcher, might provide for him. We all agreed, and promised secrecy, conditionally, that she would give her hand to Mr. Grenville, who should never hear of the matter. The footman was sent out to Boston with a good appointment, at the time our laws were cramming tea down the throats of our Americans: the effects of his activity procured him the then fashionable macaroni suit of tar and feathers; and the rude treatment of the mob, afterwards, eased him of his existence. Her ladyship professing a partiality for Mr. Gren-
ville

ville, they were united, by which a worthy man was rescued from indigence, and the malevolent class of nominal old maids was lessened one in number.

We all set off to town the next day, confident now there was no occasion for mistrust; we each had our separate foibles, which were a guarantee to the other; there was less restraint on our happiness; we enjoyed our moments. I knew no disgust but that of paying an occasional visit to my booby, in the King's-bench prison. He seemed easy about me. I gave him his way without reluctance; my captain's assiduity was continued; he never was wanting in respect to me; Byfield returned to our parties; Park-street was a scene of pleasure; all that ingenuity could contrive to create pleasure was adopted; we were above reproach, yet we escaped it too; circumspection was

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always our motto. Adieu, dear
Eliza; write to me something more
consolatory than the last.

Your affectionate,

CAROLINE.

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LETTER XV.

ELIZA to CAROLINE.

LAST night the joys of liberty just dawned upon me; a rattling in my husband's breast announced the approach of his dissolution; a perverse physician administered an emetic to him, which brought the phlegm off his stomach; for two hours my fleeting hopes were masqued with tears; on his recovery they were genuine. Habit and custom, people will say should have reconciled me to a man, after nine years cohabiting, and inspired me with friendship if not with love. My gratitude indeed he has some just claims on for his indulgence to me; but what esteem can I have for a man who involved me into

the wretchedness I have just related to you, and who was the only bar to my happiness; who purchased my person as the instrument of his pleasure, without consulting the dictates of my heart.

My recovery was slow from the fever that attacked me after Jemmy's departure; two years elapsed before my health was brought to any establishment. In the course of the time we spent a season at Bath; there I sometimes suspended my reflections in the entertainments of the place. Reading was my chief amusement, and parties which we formed amongst a few select friends, gave me more content than the mixed and unconnected crowd of public meetings. I often secluded myself from society, to gaze on the picture whose original was imprinted on my heart. The consolation of pressing the lifeless figure to my bosom, and bedewing it with my tears, was the occupation of many solitary

solitary hours. I read with anxiety the catalogue of those ravages which fire and sword made upon civil blood : every Gazette that contained the butcheries of our friends or foes, I perused trembling, till at length the fatal tale of my Jemmy's death was announced in the repulse the american army met at Schyehill.

Interior sorrow, what are you ? What means the pageant mimickry of hired mourners ? Can you reanimate the dead ? Can your formal vanity lessen one sigh that reaches the afflicted bosom ? I mourned ; the index of external pomp was not necessary to realize my grief ; it was genuine and sincere. The visible decline of my health, consumed by its hidden fire, rendered my stay at the waters necessary. I regretted it not ; an acquaintance I formed with the lady of Sir Richard Easy, made my residence eligible ; her society had such inducements as sensibility and good

good-nature could afford ; our friendship improved daily, my mind was less agitated, to which her manners contributed not a liitle.

Sir Richard's fortune, which was about 6000l. a year clear, gave him ample scope to enjoy the unruffled pleasures of a chearful temper ; the affability of his lady enhanced the respect of a very numerous circle ; they lived on the most agreeable terms ; the time of their departure arrived ; on taking leave, they pressed us to pay them a visit to Worcestershire ; my husband who was pleased with the young couple, as he called them, though they were thirteen years married, consented ; so that after returning to our house in Kent for a short time, we set out for their residence, Linton Hall.

The cordiality of Lady Easy's reception, gave me renewed pleasure in her friendship ; Sir Richard's sprightliness and good-nature made Linton Hall appear like home ; my husband

husband put on every mark of content; we were introduced to Mr. Hemmet, brother to Lady Easy, and to two Miss Fieldings, who were on a visit, as well as ourselves. The first object of our curiosity, is to discover the character and circumstances of strangers; Mr. Hemmet's behaviour and address distinguished him as a man of sentiment and good breeding; he was rather past the middle age; the same ease and affability as his sister's was evident in him; he never was married, a style marked with pleasantry was naturally in him, with an happiness of expression peculiar to himself, which was clear from offence. The Miss Fieldings were come up from Cheshire, the elder was about twenty, the younger eighteen; they were the younger couple of four sisters who lived together on a small income. Their manners were lively and unaffected; their good sense and vivacity chimed in with Mr. Hemmet's disposition; my husband

band gave himself up, as much as debility could, to society ; he found himself happy in the present ; his attachment to Mr. Hemmet exceeded any I ever saw to any man ; he seldom was happy out of his sight. I perceived that the Miss Fieldings engrossed his attention ; one frolic or other was generally on their hands. The reserved state of matrimony, debarred me from associating in their archness, though I relished it in my heart. The complaisance of Mr. Hemmet induced him to allot some time to amusements, suitable to what he thought my disposition ; he often read for me, and thus passed many sentimental hours.

He complained one evening, whilst he was reading to me, of a chilness and shivering ; his countenance became pale ; mine at the news corresponded ; I felt an uneasiness for his complaint ; his sister was alarmed, and gave him a cordial ; he found himself no better, and was obliged to lie down. I became

became quite unhappy: why, my dear, should I feel such agitation, for a man whom I only esteemed as a friend. I thought my heart was secure, but the terrors I experienced during his illness, which lasted five days, were violent, and convinced me that I was farther gone than I imagined: when his crisis was over, I rejoiced: he enquired for me as soon as his recollection was restored. This circumstance gave me satisfaction; I embraced the first opportunity, when his physician permitted him to see company, of visiting him; a languid joy appeared on his enfeebled countenance; he pressed my hand, the touch went to my heart; our visit was but short; I parted from him with regret. I became officious about him, he was sensible of my tenderness, and when we chanced to be a moment alone, he kissed my hand, which I permitted him to do without reluctance.

A short time re-established his health

health, and his usual gaiety; our amusements were resumed; he read to me daily; our subject was always descriptive of a susceptibility of heart. The Miss Fieldings quitted us in a little time; I was pleased at their departure; I now had his company to myself; my husband respected him, and received his attention to me as a mark of kindness to himself. To do him justice, he was as free from jealousy as an old man could be supposed to be; my liberty had little restraint, but I was much indebted to my own management for his indulgence; I always soothed his absurdities.

I walked out one evening into a wood, through which a purling brook murmured, a brood of bantam cocks and hens were permitted to colonize in it: the dusk came on, and the moon's lustre broke through the trees; I came to a seat opposite a pond, upon which we often took the pleasure of boating; the shrill crowing

crowing of the feathered inhabitants of the wood, the notes of the nightingale, and the still buzz of the agitated trees, lulled me into a reverie; my eyes were fixed on the curled surface of the water, which refracted the broken light of the moon, wrapt up in silence. A human voice assailed my ears, "What alone, madam!" Mr. Hemmet approached; joy succeeded my sudden alarm, he sat down and kissed my hand, my heart devoured his words; my resistance was feeble to his pressing tenderness; I sighed and laid my head upon his shoulder; he kissed my cheek; he pressed me in his arms: I grew powerless, he sustained my weight; I revived; got up from my seat; he followed me; gave me his arm; and led me to a seat beneath a shelter, where verses chosen from the lively poet of the Seasons engraved on white marble, described the plans of artful rurality that surrounded; the shade was thick and impervious to the

N chaste

chaste goddess of the night ; we sat again, my breast throbbed ; my pulse fluttered ; languor overpowered me ; a tender ardor which animated my companion subdued every caution of my will ; I sunk into his arms and —— oh ! Caroline, throw a veil over the rest.

I awoke to painful pleasure ; my affections were once more afloat in the turbulent sea of giddy and illicit pleasure. Byfield was no more, no, not in my heart ; Hemmet's tenderness improving, left no room for any other ; I raved on him ; I dreamed of him ; his absence gave me misery ; his presence, but when we were alone, pain. I blamed myself for too precipitate an affection for a man, of whose steadiness I had not time to form an opinion, and of whose affection I had little opportunity to judge. I thought he had too much honour to boast of his triumph over my weakness ; a thousand suspicions divided me ; I anticipated contempt and slight ;

slight ; I made myself miserable at every action of his that seemed dubious, my anxiety made little allowance for that prudent reserve, which he ought to have maintained before company ; I became, indeed, so miserable, that I was a stranger to rest.

Thus I breathed at the mercy of every empty surmize, and upon the whole could not find one realized ; we remained still at Linton Hall, where a Mr. Parker and his lady came on a visit from Gloucestershire. Adieu, dear Caroline, I admire your foreigner, and more the controul you have over your heart ; all happiness attend it is the wish of

Your affectionate,

ELIZA.

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LETTER XVI.

CAROLINE to ELIZA.

WHAT a fluttering piece of furniture is contained in your breast! Why should that heart of yours be so susceptible. Will you not enjoy life without that sensibility, which embitters the pleasures of variety. I think Mr. Hemmet was a good sort of a man ; you should have loved him upon even terms, that when the moment of coolness or separation arrived, you ought to be armed with indifference as well as he, and quit the field of battle with courage ; at least I would make it a drawn battle, in your situation ; but perhaps I blame you unjustly ; I do not know the conclusion of that adventure ; therefore excuse my presumption. On

On our return to town we had invitations to the city; Mr. Grenville, whose good sense procured him the esteem of the most thinking people, introduced us to an alderman and his lady, who dined with us at his house in Russel street, Bloomsbury. On hearing that a citizen, and an alderman, was to dine at our host's, I had an opportunity of gratifying a long wished-for curiosity of seeing him eat. I thought I should see a man gormandize, who had a patent for incorporating in himself, every variety which luxury could produce; but was fairly disappointed, for he turned out a sensible well-bred man, possessed of that gaiety and plainness which distinguishes the prosperous John Bull; in whom the predominance of good sense, dispensed with the formality of high life. But, what do you think of his lady? I assure you that the ease and sensibility she possessed, proves that aspersions upon the good breeding of the

city are illiberal and groundless. We were partners at whist ; I tried her temper by a few omissions, and found it proof. She became pleasing to all our company, and I was far from being sorry that I knew her.

We dined at their house, by invitation, on a Sunday, and went to Christ church in the evening, to see the boys ; a variety of conversation engrossed the evening, till supper ; cards were not to be suffered ; but I assure you the lady of the house had address enough to make the time pass agreeable. I perceived four different women domestics to be all pregnant at the same time ; I got a private opportunity of asking Mrs. —— if they were all married women which she kept ; she answered in the negative, and smiled. I was amazed : you look amazed, ma'am ; but a singular piece of business is this same appearance ; the four have but one father, who is now in the compter for his conduct. He was servant

servant here, and promised each of these wenches marriage; they took his word and behold the effect; they quarrelled about him, one swore the child to him, and by law my husband was obliged to commit him; I have desired them to look out for places, unwilling to abandon the poor creatures till they can provide for themselves, lest they might be drove to destruction. I was pleased with the goodness of the woman, and pitied the poor fellow; I thought his case hard, to be punished for contributing so liberally to the advantage of the state by population, and recollected that very true and applicable sentiment of Mackheath.

If laws were made for every degree,
To curb vice in others as in me.

Ten pounds were the penalty, which this poor fellow could not raise for this act of delinquency; and therefore his body, which deserved a better situation, was condemned to durance vile. Penalties

nalties, thus attached to crimes, render law-makers literally law-breakers.

I condemned, in my own mind, such unjustifiable severity, and wondered at the unkindness of fortune, to fix so precious a fellow in an humble sphere, who might be employed by four faded peers to raise heirs to their titles, and not be liable to mismanage his business.

It has often occurred to me since, that it would not be unworthy of women of rank and sense, to establish a fund to obviate a law so unjustly levelled against the principles of happiness. We retired, highly impressed with the satisfaction we received from city hospitality. One reflection my cicisbeo made, that struck me forcibly, I am now after seeing a foreman of the first and greatest metropolis in this world, and he professed he esteemed that rank superior to any the breath of royalty could create, which was a free subject. I liked the thought, and revered the courage of our ancestors, who

who transmitted such a glorious constitution to their offspring, as no other people under heaven enjoy but ourselves. The partiality he expressed for my country ought to make every woman aspire to inculcate independence in the man, over whom her beauty gives her influence.

Adieu, my dear Eliza, my foreigner's tenderness and assiduity continue unabated, he adores me; the indifference of my heart gives me a controul over him, which you impassioned lovers cannot attain. Write to me, my friend; I am anxious to hear from you.

Yours,

CAROLINE.

LET.

LETTER XVII.

ELIZA to CAROLINE.

I suffered for this man inexpressibly; he strove all in his power to deserve my esteem, at one time; at another he was all absence and thought. Sir Richard paid very particular attention to Mrs. Parker. Lady Easy did not seem to enjoy that tranquility which is her usual characteristic, but her habitual good-humour prevailed through all her conduct; she was sometimes pensive, her brother rallied her; Sir Richard was witty upon Mr. Parker, for a partiality he shewed to a country girl that he saw at a wake; Mrs. Parker reddened up, the green-eyed monster seemed to possess her, she retired in tears; her husband followed her to her chamber; she reproached him

him bitterly. He, poor good-natured man, protested his innocence to no purpose; Sir Richard condemned himself, and became his advocate; we were all in confusion, and contributed every one to pacify her uneasiness; the poor husband was inconsolable; my old man's good offices in the business had the best success; she paid an attention to his *sage advice*, and became more tranquil. A pacification was at length affected, and joy visibly sparkled in the eyes of the good man, who was the most obsequious of husbands.

On the re-establishment of peace, good humour resumed its sway, but a proper deference was always observed to the disposition of Mrs. Parker; she was of a moral and sentimental cast; the gravity of her manners influenced ours; she devoted a portion of each day to reading and meditation; she often perambulated the grove that surrounded the pond, reading Young, Hervey, Thomson, Shenstone, and others; from whose writings, she culled

culled the most exalted sentiments; she argued with Mr. Whitfield that, from the regular appearance of nature, all things created were under the influence of fate, and that the will of human beings was but a secondary instrument in its hands. Hobbs, she argued, was the most refined and enlightened philosopher of the age; Voltaire was the champion of truth, against the prejudices of narrow and illiberal minds; we admired her arguments and erudition; Sir Richard was her disciple, they agreed in their principles; she commended his good-sense, and their compliments became reciprocal.

I walked, one evening, through the grove, where I made my first sacrifice to the affection of Mr. Hemmet; the closeness of the verdure, which lined the walks, concealed the inward prospect from my view. A rustling noise drew my attention; I advanced quick to a turn which opened into the wood; I saw a bower,

bower, so closely interwoven with branches, as to be impervious to the eye ; the discovery led me on ; I entered it, treading lightly : at the sight of two human figures, extended on a massy seat, I screamed and became motionless ; when I discovered no less than the fair philosopher, and her pupil, making practical experiments in the field of nature. I turned away suddenly ; Sir Richard followed me, threw himself on his knees, besought my pity not to ruin the peace of two families ; he brought me back ; the partner of his felicity was struck dumb ; she looked wild ; a thousand colours flushed in her face. She at length fell on her knees, burst into tears, threw herself on my humanity, implored my compassion, and confessed her guilt. She added, it is from virtue alone, my dear Eliza, that I can expect that allowance for my weakness, which you have discovered ; your pity, madam, will be an incontestible proof of that inward

ward purity which is above doing an injury to prostrate confession.

She touched me on the right string; I assured her I never took a pleasure in magnifying foibles, and that the respect I had for the peace of two families, should ever be a guard to my secrecy on the business. It would be far from a pleasant task to me to come forward in the predicament of a public evidence, in a case which might be my own; and my conscience, which they were strangers to, was a guarantee to their wishes. Sir Richard requested we would all walk in together. I consented. The agitation of the lady was but too visible; her husband perceived her disorder, and was deeply concerned: he received her with the utmost tenderness and affection. They retired together, and Sir Richard proposed a party of quadrille, which we accepted, and thus passed the evening.

Next day Mr. and Mrs. Parker took their leave of Linton hall, and, in a few days, my husband's domestic concerns

concerns made the same step necessary to us. Sir Richard and his lady promised us the favour of spending some time at Hornhill with us. Mr. Hemmet engaged himself of the party, and gave me private assurances of his punctuality. I grew miserable at the separation ; we parted affectionately ; and I assured him that I should know no happiness till his arrival. Adieu ! how does your foreigner ? I admire his constancy and tenderness.

Your affectionate,

ELIZA.

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LETTER XVIII.

CAROLINE to ELIZA.

WHAT did that goodly woman, Mrs. Parker, want of a gallant? Who would risk the tenderness and constancy of a kind husband, that ought to suffice any woman who had a heart? Hypocrisy and dissimulation are the emanations of a debased one: in the pursuit of our illicit amours, there is still an honour to be observed to the partner of our pleasures, while the connection subsists. You and I have no excuse for our excursions into the field of enjoyment, but the impotence of your husband, the incorrigible absurdity of mine; but a man of such tender sensibility, as you describe Mr. Parker, is worthy of a woman's

woman's affections, and it is a pity he is wronged.

This circumstance reminds me of an affair that happened at a religious meeting of the saints in town; a tradesman, who lived not far from the Royal Exchange, with a wife and three children, whom he maintained decently, went with his dear consort, out of curiosity, to hear a discourse in a conventicle on a Sunday evening; the honest man expressed a satisfaction at the goodness of the doctrine, and thought it far from being objectionable; the elegance of the singing had charms for his wife, which captivated her understanding, and made her decide upon a connection with the people, amongst whom she was so highly pleased: endeavours to ensure her perseverance were not wanting; visits from the society were frequent; and her good man made no objection. In a short time, all the flimsy and gaudy fripperies of dress, became exchanged for the plain simplicity of her

new profession. Profane songs were exploded, to make room for divine incantations ; the children were sent three times a day to the house of prayer ; the good woman attended punctually also : the tradesman's business, which was indebted for its prosperity to the activity and vigilance of his wife in his absence, was neglected, or he must defer business abroad to mind his shop at home in her absence. The eldest boy, who was about fourteen, and could be useful, was not permitted to controul ; the mother's opinion must be complied with ; the father sometimes remonstrated ; but all the satisfaction he received was, to be termed a man of the world, a lover of mammon, &c. and when he became importunate, Mr. Wheedle, the preacher, was called in to exclaim against his ungodliness : one argument was very forcible in the opinion of the good man, for, as by his wife's connection, he sold many articles in his business

to

to friends in the society, so by a discontinuance of her attendance he might lose their custom. The zealous Mr. Wheedle would sometimes get into the fields, and draw a concourse of people about him, out of whom he made a few converts by his vociferation. Mrs. Siinkins (for that was the merchant's name) always attended at the foot of his pulpit, bewailing her sins, and groaning in the spirit. She was called one of the elect, one of the truly chosen, in whom the marrow of grace was substantiated; the joy which awaits the blessed were preparing for her reception. When she sat at home, she raised her voice in hymns and ejaculations; and if a customer was ever so intent on the purchase of a commodity in her shop, and the inspired moment came, she instantly retired, left the business to another, and poured out her tears or her praises, as the mood then was: hysterics very often succeeded; during which she saw visions, and received

consolations superior to those of earthly dross. Mr. Wheedle was sent for, who came to administer comfort to the oppressed sister; they staid a long time alone, and concluded their visitation with a marked serenity on both sides: a list of the distressed sisters and brethren, who were to be relieved by the most opulent, came weekly; when our good woman conveyed a piece of linen or a parcel of stockings to the good man, to be divided at his discretion amongst the indigent; and also added a piece of gold for immediate disposal.

The course of life followed by Mrs. Simkins, rendered her useless to her husband; she was so far above a concern for earthly matters, that she got as high as ——— into the attic or third story: the poor man was obliged to send for his sister to look after his house and business, after many fruitless remonstrances; upon whose arrival, he was in some measure reconciled to his wife's conduct.

Many

Many fruitless attempts were made to impress the sister's mind with a religious turn, but the woman's reason was sufficiently armed against the insidious bait by the situation of her sister-in-law, who was now little short of being insane. She every day missed goods out of the shop, of which there was no account, and gave her brother notice; the man became uneasy; the solitary communication of his wife, and her guide, began to alarm him: he hired a room in his next neighbour's house, adjoining the apartment where the saints conferred; he placed some goods in it as an excuse for taking it; a thin partition only divided the houses; he pierced the wall, and, on the next visit, he placed some of his friends convenient to the hole, who saw Mr. Wheedle administering consolation to his sister, under the patronage of Saint Roger.

Unable to contain himself, he rushed into his house, burst open the

door

door, and seized the marauder upon his peace and happiness, by the collar, charging him with his crime. The doctor, meek as a lamb, replied coolly, that he was always prepared to withstand calumny and malice, or he should be unfit for the situation he was called to fill: he preached patience to the injured man, and prayed for his conversion; he even contradicted three people who were witnesses to his conduct, and bid them defiance. They hurried him to prison, out of which he was bailed. The connections which Mr. Simkins had amongst the society extended his credit; there ensued immediately a run of his creditors upon him, which caused him to stop payment; and, in looking over the stock, he found himself seven hundred pounds deficient, that he could not account for, before the commissioners of bankruptcy; he was committed to prison by their order; the doctor was discharged for want of prosecution; the

poor man's children were turned loose upon the world ; one of them died at Tyburn ; the wife became a prostitute ; the husband died in the fleet ; and the other two lived servants in two families, who harboured them from want ; whilst the clamour and influence of a posse of female disciples, defended the doctor's innocence, and maintained his groans for him.

Such is my abhorrence for religious hypocrisy, that when those unhappy females who ply the streets stand in competition with them, I pity their lot, and can entertain only an abhorrence for the other ; if women will have gallants, let them not tarnish the sacred name of religion by a cloak to their weakness ; there is some apology for the emotions of nature, but none for hypocrisy.

My foreigner and I made an excursion to Violet bank ; we found Mr. Byfield there ; we staid a week ; we lived without either restraint or explanations ; in fact, we knew that two beds

beds served all four of us, without confessing it. Byfield, and my captain, cemented a very agreeable friendship ; they both acted like men, who could merit the confidence of any woman : their emulation was to create pleasure ; we seemed to be their goddesses ; I felt joy without restraint : this man was so much master of the art to please, he gave me no time to reflect ; we passed from one agreeable thing to another ; thus we numbered our days, and returned to town to vary our scenes of happiness.

Could you imagine that I fe't some jealousy for a little attention he paid a lady, that seemed to receive it at his hands ? Lady Bab Dally, who spent an evening with us, engrossed his attention ; at all their talk, with a stoop, he was very gallant to her ; she received it well. Lord Paget, who you remember ruined his fortune at Newmarket, an admirer of her ladyship, was in the dumps ; I encouraged his lordship's addresses, and retaliated :

thus

thus we spent the evening at war, without declaring it. We staid late; my swain, on our departure, offered me his hand; Lord Paget did the same; I accepted it. My captain looked a little dismayed, when he saw me led out by another preferred to himself; when I got into my carriage I bowed to him, and drove home; and there an uneasy and restless night awaited

Your,

CAROLINE.

LETTER XIX.

ELIZA to CAROLINE.

SHORTLY after our arrival at Hornhill, my wishes were gratified in a visit from Mr. Hemmet, who was the fore-runner of his bro-

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ther and sister. My husband, who esteemed him, received him with unaffected joy; my duty to shew a welcome to the friend of my spouse, had the interest of my inclinations. In a week after arrived Sir Richard, his lady, and a miss Blab, who came to their house the day before they set out. After the first ceremony of introduction, the young lady turned to Mr. Hemmet, and spoke with the familiarity of old acquaintance, “ I have fixed you, Hemmet, at last; I have shot you flying. I pursued you to Bath, from Bath to London, from London to Linton hall, and from Linton hall to Hornhill. Now, Sir, be so good as to inform me of the future plan of your route, that I may give intelligence to your friends at Belbridge, when they will, of course, have the pleasure of seeing you.” “ Had I been guilty of tergiversation, miss Blab, the honour of so fair a pursuer, must have arrested my flight; but, now you may charge in front, I shall come to the point. I appeal to my sister, how often our family

family have been to Belbridge, when our entreaties to your family to see Linton hall, were harder to be effected, than the removal of Linton hall to Belbridge." "Mr. Hemmet's ceremony ought to be overlooked by you, when you knew the happiness conferred on a family that never parted from you but with regret; I acknowledge the justice of the rest of your charge, and cannot vindicate us from it in reference to Sir Richard and lady EASY." "But you have got an elegant phæton, Mr. Hemmet; the advantage it has, above other vehicles, in procuring the benefit of the air, invites me to request an excursion under your care, a few mornings, before breakfast; I hope that favour will not trespass on your goodness. Be assured I'll take no refusal, Mr. Hemmet." "I am an awkward driver, miss Blab, and fearful of entrusting so much treasure to my unskilfulness; and, until I am a greater proficient, I would not risque my reputation in an attempt, which might deprive me of the future

happiness that would attend my dexterity." "I shall run all hazards, Mr. Hemmet, and if any disaster should arise, I am content to stand or fall with you; to preserve you totally to myself, and thus procure good out of evil, to-morrow I expect you, and rely on your punctuality." "Then, miss, if you will have it so, and will venture, you must take upon yourself the consequence."

"Agreed Mr. Hemmet."

This sample of a young lady's forwardness to a man with whom I wished to spend some happy hours, was a bad omen to my hopes; every day convinced me of the danger of giving the least trace in my conduct to a woman who talked on every thing, and had a design upon the man I loved. The laws of hospitality prevented me from shewing her any coolness, and she stood so well in her own opinion, that a little would not discountenance her. She was attended by Mr. Hemmet, in his phæton, and when she took an airing in his phæton,

ton, she was flushed with a singular joy. She was never pleased in his absence, and always enquiring for him; which rendered the least enjoyment of his company to me, impracticable. Thus we passed three weeks in misery, till the account arrived of an action for *crim. con.* brought by Mr. Parker, against a young Oxonian. Mrs. Parker was aunt to the young lady: This piece of news disconcerted the volubility of her tongue, and dispatched her home.

There appeared to be no regret at her departure: I found a load taken off my bosom by it; my husband generally got queamish, when he sat in her company, so that now we enjoy that social happiness her presence debarred us of.

I was admitted to an assembly at Maidstone, in company with Sir Richard and his lady; Mr. Hemmet was of the party; this was the first license I had of the kind, without my husband's presence, since our marriage. I danced with Mr. Hemmet, Sir

Richard with lady Tipit ; lady Easy with captain Morrison : in a little time we missed some of our party : lord Tipit asked for Sir Richard, his lady was absent too ; a footman informed his lordship that a gentleman in green and gold handed her to a carriage, and walked after her ; he followed him to an inn, where he saw the gentleman go in, and heard him enquire for a lady just come in a carriage ; he was shewed up stairs. This all passed, unknown to us ; we imagined they were gone to the card table. His lordship, who played deep, was engaged at play in the beginning of the night, from which he seldom budged before morning : he pursued his wife, and, on being shewed the door, ordered his coachman to burst it open without making any previous noise, and there he contemplated the happy pair seemingly in want of fig-leaves.

The news soon spread ; Sir Richard was in custody ; his lady made wretched ; the eyes of the room were upon her ;

her ; her amiable manners, which always attracted respect, occasioned her to be pitied ; she retired, with her brother, to her lodgings : I remained with her, while Mr. Hemmet went to see Sir Richard. The magistrate took their parole for appearance the next day, when lady Easy and I returned to Hornhill ; we told my husband what happened ; he regretted the fate of lady Easy, but expressed his wish of never seeing Sir Richard again. Her brother followed us the next evening ; when he, with his sister, took their leave of us.

Now I remained cooped up with my antiquated mate, without the prospect of seeing, at any future period, those friends whom I esteemed so much ; or rather, that brother and sister who had my esteem and affection ; as my husband was peremptory against ever admitting Sir Richard into his house, I saw myself lost to Mr. Hemmet. I read his marriage in the papers, a few weeks after, to a lady who had often been mentioned as the happy

happy object of his choice. I felt the necessity of removing him from my bosom ; the difficulty was less than I expected ; I soon forgot him, and turned my thoughts, for a while, to domestic employment. The care of my child engrossed my attention, he sometimes brought his father to my mind ; I wished to erase those objects which gave me pain, and not permit my fluttering heart to be the sport of fortune.

Retirement, which fortifies the resolution, had determined me to a less dangerous course of life, than I hitherto pursued. The two instances of detection, which came under my knowledge, cautioned me to be more upon the reserve. They were facts that came home to my own feelings, and alarmed me. If one who experienced what I did, reflects or acts by my experience, the pleasure arising from an illicit amour, will be no compensation for the anxieties, fears, apprehensions and terrors, which attend the pursuit of it: yet, when

Yqqd

love

love assails the heart, what power of reason can resist its seductive impulse. I thought myself firm in my conduct, from the propriety of my reflections; but the hour of trial soon dissipated my stock of reflection; and the lingering poison that invaded my eyes, once more subdued my heart. I will not tire you out, my next shall tell you of the object and the means.

Your affectionate,

ELIZA.

LETTER XX.

CAROLINE to ELIZA.

YOU expatiate well upon love, but what have you or I to do with it? Our situation precludes us from building with certainty upon that

that foundation : we have no assurance that the man we possess to day will be ours to-morrow. Let fate disengage us from the indissoluble knot which rivets us to repentance, and then talk of it. You have improved, in indifference, and I hope you will not have to tell me in future, that you felt *much* uneasiness about any man. Hemmet's marriage is one lesson to you ; the infidelity of Sir Richard another ; and I can add a third, Mr. Byfield has exchanged the bed of his widow for the arms of a wife. I have just learned that he was married, two days after our party at Violet Bank ; yet you see with what composure he carried on his professions to the widow, and his addresses to his wife, at the same time. Let your heart be steady ; I speak as if it was the present time ; but you are yet in the bloom of life ; suffer no exulting passion to beat down your fortitude, till the course of nature relieves you, and sets you free from the loathsome burthen that clings

to you, and weighs down your youth.

My swain called on me the next day; he rallied me for the notice I took of his trifling with Lady Bab. Did I imagine, he asked me, that such a person could be a rival to me? If I did, I was quite unjust to his taste, and my own accomplishments: his view was to divert himself at Lord Paget's expence, who was paying his addresses to Lady Bab's fortune; and as he heard his lordship say once, in his presence, that foreigners in general were adventurers, or fortune-hunters, he wished to mortify him a little. I became easily pacified; any other cause of concern might have affected me as well, so that after the uneasiness of the first night or so, I should have felt little uneasiness in losing sight of him.

I saw that the surest method to engage his attention was to affect indifference; when he made an assignation, I ceased to be punctual. He endeavoured all he could to anticipate my

my wishes, and I had as much indulgence from him as a woman could reasonably wish. The season for sea-bathing came on ; my mother, whose health was declining fast, was ordered to Brighton ; we set out, my lovers attended us ; Mrs. Sims, Lady Bab Dally, Lord Paget, Mr. Grenville, and Lady Harriet were to follow us. The groupe soon arrived ; we formed parties amongst ourselves ; a Mr. Townly, who followed the widow, made one of our company. We all got lodgings in one neighbourhood, and we associated the oftener. Our noble hero of the turf had his carriage seized twice in execution. Mr. Grenville released it ; Lady Bab, who always expressed a repugnance to his lordship's addresses, determined in favour of our new acquaintance, Mr. Townly ; her advances to that gentleman were clearer than dubious. The widow rallied her ladyship, yet she bore it with that *sang froid*, which bordered upon indifference ; whilst Townly's attention

tion to Lady Bab, and intimacy with Mrs. Sims, was equally conspicuous. Not an hour of his time but was engrossed by one or the other. This young man was remarkable for a peculiarity of manners; he was gentle, sedate, and languid; yet, in conversation, shewed a well-turned mind, with much sensibility, which rarely failed to procure him the esteem of those who knew him. He often read to my mother, who admired his society, and reluctantly parted with him, for any other; my lover often filled his place, who was always engaged in one undertaking or other to give satisfaction to the old lady, and though his enunciation was scarce *intelligible*, yet the pains he took to read to her satisfaction, made her attentive.

He read to us one evening an account he received from a correspondent; it was an account of an elopement of a young lady from her parents, on the terrors of approaching matrimony, contrary to her inclinations, with a man whose age (more than

treble hers) was not only an objection, but the singular method he took to recommend himself beyond a rival who had the lady's wishes, is a curious circumstance in the annals of matrimony.

The old enamored had reached his seventieth year without ever submitting to the bonds of Hymen, to which he all his life professed an aversion; and, in return, the world charged him with impotence; at that age (a rare time to arrive at manhood) he must have a wife: with the importance of a Cacafogo, he sent for a neighbouring gentleman who had nine children, six of whom were daughters, to provide for out of a small patrimony. Four of them were marriageable; he proposed his terms to the gentleman, who hesitated, to have the concurrence of his wife; be not daunted, said the old squire, at the invidious report of my neighbours, who throw reflections upon my virility. I have proof positive that there is no failure in that respect in me; within these six weeks, I have had two children laid at my door, the effects

fects of my potency; and, not to suffer these inordinate stings to get the better of me, I would prefer indulging my voluptuousness in the arms of a virtuous wife, to the promiscuous embraces of loose women. Therefore let me know your determination, Sir: I am worth 30,000l. in the funds, 15,000l. in mortgages, and a clear estate of 600l. a year. I shall make you grandfather to the heir of most of it. Let your wenches pass muster before me, and I will be the man who, like Pavis, will adjudge the golden prize to the fairest, who shall have a settlement, if she survives me, to support the dignity of my relict. The poor gentleman received the proposal with silence, said he would refer the matter to his wife, and return an answer the next day.

The morrow came, and the consent of the parents to embrace the proposal was communicated to the four eldest daughters. The poor victims desired to prepare for a review; a reluctance, that never before

impeded their duty, was visible in every one: the old gentleman arrived, having sent before him the two alledged proofs of his potency, with as much composure as if he was producing laudable samples of his conduct, or rather a pattern for future manufacture to a workman. After a survey of the children, by which he displayed his powers in their athletic and lusty limbs, he glanced at the four mutes, and pitched on the third, the lovely Emma, to be the destined sacrifice. Every thing for solemnizing the marriage was put in forwardness, and a day appointed; the old dotard was happy, and took much pains to impart the same to his fair one; she assumed content, and thus passed the time, till the arrival of the appointed day.

All things being in readines for going to church, the bride was called down stairs, but no bride answered; a general search was made, but to no purpose; enquiries for her were ineffectual; she absolutely had left the house,

house; by what conveyance, with whom, or how, was all a mystery: her wedding cloaths lay in her room; all was confusion. The old man was irritated; left the house in a rage; and the poor family were all in distress for her loss: the general opinion was, that she threw herself into a river which ran near the house, and perished. The disconsolate parents had the waters searched, and were at one time of opinion that she was carried off by the current: they mourned for her, and gave her up for lost; at another time they entertained hopes that she might be living, and enquired amongst all their friends for her; proclaiming protection and pardon, if she heard of their researches, and returned to their disconsolate arms.

I called upon Mrs. Sims, where I found Mr. Townly, and related the story to them; Townly seemed sensibly affected at the recital: I looked stedfast at him. " You knew the lady then, Mr. Townly; your agitation betrays a singular concern." Tears gushed from him. I was amazed

amazed. The effeminacy of the person struck me. Pardon the imposition, madam, says he, in a broken voice, I am no longer able to keep up with you ; I am that unhappy daughter who appear in this disguise, under the protection of our mutual friend, Mrs. Sims, who gave me a refuge when I eloped from impending wretchedness, and will relate to you the particulars, if they are worth your curiosity. I embraced her, assured her she did not any thing culpable in my eyes ; I consoled her ; she requested I would not disclose the business to any one, as she meant shortly to take her leave, and avail herself of the forgiveness of her parents, to return again to their protection. I pitied and felt for her, and offered all in my power to contribute to her happiness while she staid. Farewell, my friend, expect the conclusion of this affair at another time : tell me how your tender heart relapsed into future alarms, and believe me,

Your sincere,

C A R O L I N E.

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